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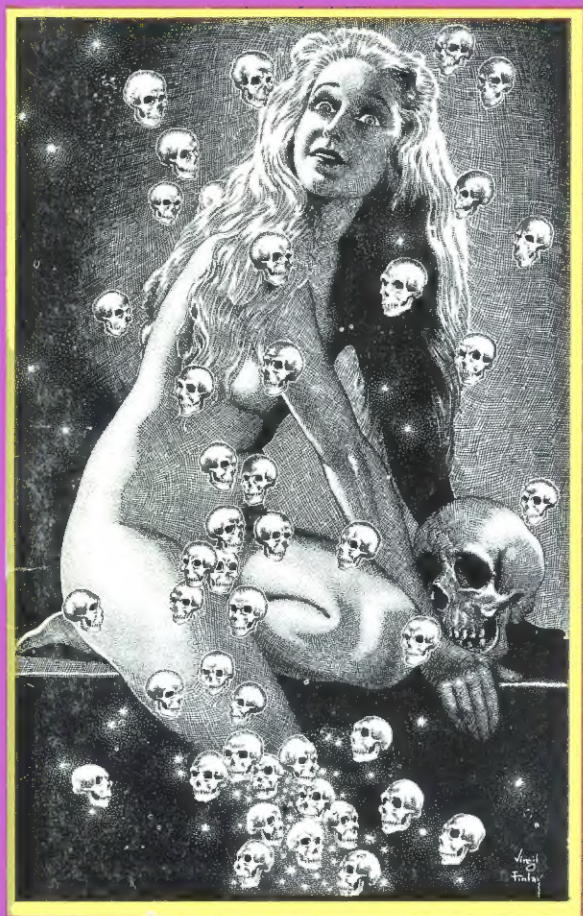
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MAGAZINE OF HORROR

BIZARRE

• FRIGHTENING

• GRUESOME



First Magazine
Publication of

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by DAVID H.
KELLER, M.D.

•

THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR

by DOUGLAS M.
DOLD




•

LEAPERS

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•

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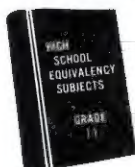
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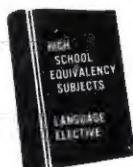
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magazine of **HORROR**

The Bizarro and The Unusual

Volume 4

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Robert A. W. Lowndes, Editor

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The Editor's Page

A most uncommon man, writing in very common English about people who talk in a common manner, but who do uncommon things—that was David H. Keller, M. D., who was introduced to science fiction readers in the February 1928 issue of *AMAZING STORIES*, and to weird story readers in the July 1928 issue of *WEIRD TALES*.

"For thirty years," writes Sam Moskowitz, in his Introduction to the collection of Keller stories entitled *Life Everlasting* (The Avalon Company, 1947; out of print) "he wrote simply for the pleasure of writing, with the definite objective of finding a satisfactory form of expressing his thoughts. This search finally produced a style, later noted for its simplicity and beauty, which became his trade-mark. While for many years he was the leading writer of *science fiction*, he never produced a trend, no one being able to imitate successfully either his style or the authenticity of his human understanding."

Now the phenomenon of a person writing for his own satisfaction and pleasure, rather than for any particular market, and only thinking of trying to sell what he has written later on, is a far more common one than most of us may be aware of. Editors are aware of it, and so are author's agents—particularly those literary agencies which have departments for reading and criticizing the works of non-professionals, for a fee. A considerable percentage of the manuscripts received by such

"reading fee" departments are written in very common English, and are "about" the very common experiences of very common people. This is because the writers have not absorbed (or in some instances, even encountered) writing above the crack-barrel level, and their experience of life and of other people, while intense in some areas, perhaps, has been severely restricted. Selected excerpts from the stories of Dr. Keller might give the impression that he belongs in this category; and nothing could be farther from the truth.

The sort of people I am speaking about above have not had a free choice of style or subject matter; they have written the only way they possibly could write, out of necessity, and have written about the only things they could write—their limited area of experience. Once in a while you encounter an exception, a person whose capacity for depth in experience is so great that this person can do wonders within his or her limitations; but generally speaking, even such a person has only "one book in him", or her, as the expression goes.

David H. Keller was 47 at the time he sold his first story. He had had a college education; had had army experience; had been a horse-and-buggy doctor, had practiced psychiatry (which included serving in state hospitals for the insane), and had been "writing for pleasure" working toward a style which suited him, since the age of 14. Theoretically, then, he could have written in other (and more conventional) manners had he wanted to; and certainly his style is not the result of a limited vocabulary, as is so frequently the

case of people mentioned above. Just a quick glance through his first-published story, *The Revolt of the Pedestrians* shows a large number of words which you would not find in the usual cracker-barrel manuscript, or which you would not find used correctly and with any understanding of their meaning and implications. The art which is concealed in Dr. Keller's deceptively simple style is the art of precision, and his particular beauty is not prettiness, but the beauty of saying a great deal without large amounts of rhetorical expansiveness or what is generally considered flowery language.

That, more than any other one reason I should say, is why no other science fiction writer has imitated him successfully. To write as simply as this with such precision must include the ability to write in a much more complicated manner; and to do so with so great an effect must include a wide area of living experience, both within and without. Dr. Keller is one of the great originals in science fiction; and, as we find in music (Berlioz, Mussorgsky) such persons do not start trends, do not found schools. Certain aspects of their work are imitated, at times—but their contribution as a whole remains apart, and aside from superficial resemblances no one before or after them really sounds like them.

Moskowitz' introduction is dated September 1947; near the end, he states: "In a recent letter, Dr. Keller tells me that he has finished his last long novel, *The Abyss*, and that he will write no more." Sam then expresses his doubts about this, feeling sure that Keller "cannot help writing

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any more than he can avoid breathing." Since Dr. Keller died in 1966 I should be astonished were I to learn that Sam was mistaken, and that the good doctor wrote no more after 1947.

He himself wrote in 1933, in an interview for *Science Fiction Digest*: "I look forward to death as the Great Adventure. If after death comes nothingness, what a wonderful rest it will be, for I have been tired for many years. And if there is another life, I will go further, see more, spend less, than I have on any trip so far. The first thing I will do is to hunt up a good library. I am afraid that the Heavenly one is rather well censored, and I may have to go to the asbestos library of Gehenna to get the books I want to read. Then I am going to start writing. My idea of Heaven is to have every story accepted by an appreciative editor."

I concur with the sentiments, though it surely seems to me that a censored "Heavenly" library constitutes an impossibility by definition; should I wake up after leaving this body, to find myself in a locality where books are banned, bowdlerized, expurgated, etc., I won't be deceived into imagining that this is Heaven! But, as with the Good Doc-

(Turn to page 113)

The Abyss

by David H. Keller, M. D.

(author of *The Seeds of Death*, *Heredity*)

This story was written just before commercial television had made real headway, when t.v. antennas on apartment house rooftops, etc., could be seen but were far from universal. And also before violence and brutality had become a common thing in the daily life of a big city, so that an atrocity was news. Since that time, events have caught up with what goes on in this novel, without the employment of a special drug; but the large-scale use of human beings as guinea pigs has not taken place in so casual a manner here—at least, it is not generally discussed in so matter-of-fact a manner.

One of the ways in which Dr. Keller has consistently been able to project horror effectively has been in his complete reversal of the conventional literary manner. There is no labelling, no underlining, no piling up of adjectives in an attempt to make certain that even the dumbest reader will understand that these things are horrible. All is quiet and matter-of-fact; as casual and everyday as the casual manner in which German industry during the Third Reich was linked and meshed in with the concentration camps, the extermination centers, and the human experimental centers—all concerned with efficiency of the operation, hardly anyone bothering (and many truly unaware) of just what was being done so efficiently. The psychotic, the hysteric, the giggling and laughing sadist watching or describing victims strikes home at once; but greater horror lies in the calm, perfectly adjusted bureaucrat who can look at such things as entirely natural, and hardly anything to make a fuss over. If is this approach, we feel, that makes *The Abyss* a story you are not likely to forget.



illustration by John V. Baltadonis

I

"MR. HURD REFUSES TO SEE YOU," said the butler.

"Mr. Hurd has to see me," insisted Dr. John Jeremy. "Did you tell him about the eight million white mice?"

"I delivered your message about the millions of white mice. He is not even interested in one mouse, irrespective of its color. I fancy he does not like mice. At present he is in the library reading and asked me to tell you that he was not at home."

"I should think he would be interested. You have so many mice in this house. Look there! One in the corner. See it?"

The butler looked for a fatal second, just long enough to allow Jeremy to slip past him. He went running over the marble floor followed by the irate Englishman. After two failures he located the door of the library and, entering, closed the door.

"Are you Mr. Hurd?" he asked the man reading by a table.

"I am Mr. Hurd," was the brusque reply. "Who the hell are you and what are you doing here?"

"My name is John Jeremy. I want to talk to you about eight million white mice. Your butler says that you are not interested, but I am sure you will be when I tell you about them. I understand you are intensely interested in sociology and anthropology. You financed that expedition to Borneo. You wrote a book on the relation of food to religion. I want to tell you about something new—the greatest mass experiment of all time. Think of it! Making white mice of eight million people!"

"Are you insane?"

"No! But you may think I am when I tell you about my proposed plan. It is so vast in its psychological implications that at times it seems almost incredible that any one should even think of trying it."

The banker took out his watch. Checking the time he placed it on the table and leaned back comfortably in his chair. "I will give you exactly half an hour."

"That will be enough to start with. All my life I have been interested in the abnormal conduct of the human race. Twenty-five years ago I became a Doctor. But the study of the heart, kidneys and lungs failed to absorb my entire interest so I became a psychiatrist. In State Hospitals I studied the behavior of the abnormals of society. I lived, played with and talked to them. One day I asked myself the question: Why do they act, think and talk as they do? Freud and Jung answered that question but I did not think they had the complete solution. They ex-

plained the existence of the subconscious and the barrier between it and the conscious, but they did not explain what caused the barrier and why it was so rapidly lowered in some patients.

"Then I realized, as all psychiatrists do, that there were two kinds of psychotic persons. Those outside institutions and those inside. Of course you know that. You have met, and read of, many persons you considered insane and no doubt wondered just in what way they differed from those who were confined in hospitals. Let me explain it to you!

"One group has barriers that drop very low. They drift back into subconscious levels of past centuries. They sit in the Egyptian position, even assume the foetal attitude. The more peculiar they are the less they repress their conduct and speech; this makes them obnoxious to society, and the relatively sane protect themselves by isolating the irritants in prisons called Hospitals for the Insane."

"That is rather well said," commented Hurd.

"Thanks. Now about the other group? They also irritate, puzzle and perplex the world but at the same time often interest and amuse it. They force people to think and that is one of the great achievements of all times. These psychotic persons are called, for want of a better name, geniuses. Every age has them. We consider our age exceptional in their number, but that is because so few of us, relatively have a vast knowledge of history.

"Allow me to briefly describe some of these odd persons who live in our own era. Here is a man who is called a great musician. He puts noises together in an unusual manner. If he thinks of a noise no instrument can make he invents a new instrument to produce that noise. Finally he gathers together a number of musicians and forms an orchestra. They play on the new instruments and make a collection of new noises. Critics come to hear his new symphony and shake their heads. They are listening to something new. The old words formerly used in musical criticism are meaningless. Vaguely they feel that the symphony must be great because the composer is great, but secretly they wonder what this dissonance means.

"Then there was the author who had a message he wanted to give to the world. He found, to his surprise, that the English language was inadequate. Think of that! One hundred and sixty thousand words and yet he could not say what he wanted to. What did he do? He created a new language. It looked like English. It read and sounded like English, but it did not make sense. Patiently he tried to explain that it is the sound and not the meaning of the words that tells the story. Overnight

he becomes a best seller. Thousands read him because thousands talked about him. How many understood him. Did you?"

"At times, here and there I thought I knew what Joyce was trying to say," admitted the banker.

"At least you are honest. Then came a surge of painters. For centuries artists drew and colored life as they saw it. Now comes a group who paint what they hear and smell and think of. They call it *Art*. Not content to use paint they take metals and papers and cloth, throw them together and give it a name. And only those who can hear and smell and think exactly as the artist have the least idea of what it is all about. Did you see that painting by Picasso, *Two Girls and a Boat*? There is no doubt about the boat; anyone can see that, but how about those girls who are anatomied like crab claws? What did you think of the paintings of women with two eyes on one side of their head? Or the almost headless women whose bodies were nothing but breasts and buttocks? Did you read the opinions of the critics? Were they puzzled? They certainly were; but unwilling to confess that they could not understand, they formed a chorus and shouted. '*Here is something great. It is wonderful because it is not to be understood*.' One went so far as to advise that the best way to look at these pictures was through eyes half shut."

"I have a Picasso in my art gallery," interrupted the banker.

"Certainly. You did not want to be considered an uninitiate. Now suppose we talk about dancing; one of the oldest forms of artistic expression. Did you see the Bacchanale at the Ballet Russe? Did you understand it? Did anyone? What the composer was trying to do was to use the dance as an expression of some form of thinking; but it was as incomprehensible as trying to make a meal out of a sunset, or a suit of clothes out of a rainbow.

"How about the poets? Again we have the idea of trying to use a new mode of expression. You have been perplexed when you read it—annoyed by the endless repetition of words—like '*I see a sea and to me the sea is only a sea that is easie, seasy, sicy see, for the seas sees the seecies I sea*.' It does not make sense to us but the lady who wrote it said that back of this flow of words there was a thought.

"My idea, and I do not claim any originality for it, is simply this: These people are, in their way, as psychotic as the insane who are behind hospital walls, and they are similar for the same reason. Their threshold of consciousness is lowered. They go down into the deep and bring up something. The average person does not understand them be-

cause they have never been down into that deep well of the subconscious."

"That sounds reasonable," agreed Hurd, "But what makes them do it?"

"Now we arrive at the real point of the argument. It seemed to be some poison: alcohol, morphine, the toxic materials produced by tuberculosis, and unusual outpouring of endocrines, perhaps secretions from diseased livers or kidneys. Such conditions have often been found in unusual people. I can show that every genius was sick at the peak of his greatness. Here is what has puzzled me: great men and women all similar in their endeavor to produce new thought in a new form and all sick from a variety of diseases. The cause did not explain the result. Then I had a new idea. All these diseases formed a chemical substance in the body. Could it be that it was this chemical that acted to produce these unusual forms of expression and not the various diseases which produced the chemical?"

"I have to hurry. You only gave me half an hour. Do you follow my argument? A chemical! If it was present in the bodies of these geniuses, evidently psychotic, it had to be present in the persons who lived and died in Hospitals for the Insane. I examined the blood from hundreds of insane. I was even fortunate enough to obtain blood from those psychotics not in hospitals. In over 90% of all these blood specimens I found a chemical which has a long complicated name derived from its formula. Suppose we call it XYZ. I was able to isolate it, determine the formula and learned how to manufacture it synthetically."

"Let me see if I can follow your argument," said the banker. "Is this it? You find a chemical XYZ in the blood of various abnormals. You believe their peculiar mental reactions are due to this chemical. Your idea is that they act the way they do because their threshold of consciousness is lowered by the action of this drug. Is that correct?"

"Absolutely."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I started doing it five years ago. One of your friends, Howard of the Howard Steel Company, became interested and financed my research."

"But Howard died six months ago!"

"Yes, but while alive he was of great help to me. With his money I started a small hospital in the Labrador. I selected ten normal men who were willing, for a price, to act as guinea pigs. I gave these men injections of the new chemical XYZ. I studied their reaction—the time element between injection and first response—the depth of their fall into the subconscious—how long it lasted—how it ended. Howard was the

one who suggested that the experiment be tried on millions instead of ten. He thought New York City would be an ideal location."

Hurd laughed bitterly. "Howard never liked the city. I remember when he first came here and organized his Company. Used to read science fiction. One of the authors delighted in destroying New York and Howard always read his stories. Told me about them. 'Not a bad idea,' he would say. 'The nation would be better off if this monstrosity was wiped out.' That was probably why he financed your research—he wanted to do in life what the science fiction writer did in his stories. Perhaps it was a good idea that he died. Just what was the result of your experiments in the Labrador?"

"At least interesting. I determined the dose of XYZ necessary to throw the patient backwards two thousand years. The reaction starts fifteen days after the drug is given and lasts about thirty days. At the end of that period the patient falls into a deep sleep. This lasts for several days and then they wake, but when they recover consciousness there is an absolute lack of memory of their conduct during the thirty days of subconscious exploration."

"Your ten men. What did they do?"

"They lived, thought and talked like the Romans, Greeks, Huns and Norsemen did two thousand years ago. Fortunately they talked in English. No doubt their conduct was normal for twenty centuries ago but in our time it resembled a very interesting form of hell. We were able to control them; no one was killed, but the nurses had a very difficult month."

Hurd lit a fresh cigar. "Are you serious? Do you really want to give this drug to eight million people in New York?"

"Yes; with your millions to help me. There is a subconscious memory. I am certain that I have proven that this includes inherited or ancestral memory. Now I am going to ask you a question! If the millions in this city are simultaneously given a dose of XYZ sufficient to throw them back twenty centuries, and its effects will last for thirty days, what will happen in that month? You do not know. I do not know. But we could find out! I need your help because it will cost a lot of money."

"It may cost more than that," replied Hurd.

MR. HURD SAT BACK IN HIS CHAIR with his eyes closed. He seemed almost asleep. John Jeremy sat silent, watching. At last the

banker roused from his thinking and asked: "You really do not know the exact contents of this subconscious?"

"No. I can only imagine. It must vary in different people according to heredity."

"You do not know whether it would benefit or harm the human race to have the barrier suddenly lowered?"

"No. My thought, however, is this: As humanity gained in wisdom certain thoughts were placed down there and forgotten. Perhaps it was a protective form of psychological reaction, a Chinese wall built to keep out the darker part of man's journey towards the stars. From my observations of the insane, part of it is very horrible."

"I suppose you are right there," agreed the banker. "After all, none of us know just what a man is really thinking, especially when he permits himself to go down into the abyss. Take my butler, for example. His name is Perkins. He has worked for me for nearly ten years. I see him every day. When I go to Florida, Canada or England he goes with me. He has served me, my wife, and our children. And all that time I have not really known him. I do not know what he thinks. I do not know how he spends his time off. I do not even know that his name is Perkins. He has a barrier between me and his real personality, one which I have never even tried to cross. I wonder what he really does think—for example—what does he think about me and my family?"

"Why not ask him?"

"Not a bad idea. He has never refused to obey me. Of course it would not be a real test of the subconscious but it would, at least, give us some inkling of just what is beyond his Chinese wall."

Hurd pressed a button on his desk and without any delay, almost as though the man had been waiting at the closed door, Perkins entered.

"Yes, sir. Is there anything I can do for you, sir?"

"There is, Perkins. Meet Doctor Jeremy. We have just had a most interesting talk about the subconscious. Do you know what that is?"

"Yes, sir. Years ago I read the works of Freud and became so interested that I took a special course at Columbia in abnormal psychology. Thus I know a little of the subconscious mind."

Hurd stiffened in his chair. Jeremy gave a low whistle of astonishment.

"That is most interesting Perkins," exclaimed Hurd. "Most interesting! I had no idea you were a psychologist. I suppose the next thing you will tell me is that you have a degree from Columbia?"

"No, sir. I did however, get a few degrees from Oxford."

"And now you are a butler?" Incredulity was in Hurd's tone.

"Yes, sir. It is this way, sir: The youngest son of the youngest son, if you know what I mean, sir. Some years ago I decided to write a thesis for my Doctor's degree, something on the psychological reactions of the ultra-rich. In order to obtain first hand case material, I entered service with you. My original plan was to study various families but yours was so interesting that I remained with you. I trust you have no objections, sir?"

"Well, I'll be damned! So we were just your four guinea pigs! How is your thesis progressing?"

"Rather well. The publishers have it now. Of course no actual names were mentioned. I was most careful to conceal your identity."

"That was *very* considerate. Sit down; have a cigar. I want to ask you a question."

"Thank you, sir, but if you will excuse me, sir, I will smoke one of my own cigars. I have never approved your choice of tobaccos. If you recall, I have several times suggested a change in your brand of cigars. I have been able to do rather well with your clothing, but even a butler, an expert butler, if I may say so, sir, cannot lay out his master's cigars. However, I am giving notice effective in a few days. Perhaps your next man will be more capable in some respects."

"I understand," sighed Hurd. "This is all very revealing. I am certain this must all be very interesting to Doctor Jeremy. Now here is the question that I want you to answer absolutely honestly. You have been with me ten years. During that time you have had many opportunities to closely observe my wife, daughter, son, and last of all, myself. You have made me four, and I presume, our friends, the subjects of a psychological thesis. Just what do you think of us? What would you do to us if you were absolutely uninhibited? What would the subconscious desires cause you to do?"

"I would leave this house as soon as I could pack, sir."

"That is the result of your thinking but not the actual thoughts from the subconscious. Come, Perkins, answer my question; lower the threshold. It is an order! You have never refused to comply."

The man's face whitened. His clasped hands tightened. At last he said:

"It would be very unpleasant for me to do that, sir."

"I think you should do it, Perkins," suggested Jeremy. "After all it is simply a psychological experiment. Mr. Hurd and I want to know just how a man with your education and background would act if he suddenly ceased to repress himself, doing exactly as he desired. It should prove

interesting to you, too. You might use it as a final chapter for your book."

"Do you really want me to, Mr. Hurd?" asked the butler.

"I really do."

"You will not take offense at anything I may say?"

"None whatever."

"Give me a little time to think. Wait until I finish my cigar."

"Certainly. Take all the time you want. Doctor Jeremy and I will keep silent so we will not disturb you."

"Very good, sir. I will try it."

Fifteen minutes passed. At last Perkins roused and opened his eyes. "I am positively astonished, Mr. Hurd, at the thoughts that came to me. They must have been with me for a long time but I never knew how terrifying they were. I have faced some difficult situations but this is absolutely the most difficult. If you are ready I will begin. Because you are the head of this family which I have served for so many years I will start with you:

"I consider you one of the most selfish, stubborn, and blind of men. You claim to be cultured, but in so many ways you are a crude, unmitigated ass. I have tried to make a gentleman of you, but one cannot 'make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.' For ten years I have tolerated you. What you needed all this time was a thorough thrashing. I would borrow a long rope from the chauffeur, come into this library and, with my bare hands, I would beat you nearly to a pulp. I could easily do it for I was champion boxer at Oxford and have always kept fit, boxing at least ten rounds a week at my club. You would be helpless but not unconscious. I would then tie you to a chair, gag you to keep you from calling for help. Then—"

Perkins paused, staring hard at his hands before continuing: "Then I would drag your wife into this room. Do you know very much about your wife except that she is a beautiful woman? Do you know what she thinks? She has been physically true to you, but mentally she has betrayed you, in fantasy, with every fine young male animal she has ever met. Did you know that? You could have prevented most of this if you had been a real husband to her instead of a checking account. But you thought a woman was fully contented with plenty of money, fine clothing, a winter home at Miami, a summer home in Canada and a box at the opera. I repeat, I would drag her in here by her hair and I would fulfill, to the uttermost, all her romantic dreams which she has dreamed with a hundred men. Then I would gag her also, leave her lying at your feet.

"I would get a butcher knife from the kitchen and I would kill your son by beheading him. That is the kindest thing that could happen. You think, and everyone agrees, that he is a fine man studying for the ministry. Some day, if he had lived, he would have stood in his vestments before lighted candles and spoken words to various neurasthenic ladies who filled his church because it would have been so romantic to be led in worship by a young man who had renounced the life of the rich man to serve God. Do you know *why* he wants to enter the church? Of course not. You know nothing about your family. You have lived with a wife, procreated two children but you know less of them than you do of the real social structure of the natives of the Solomon Islands. I will leave his body in his study but I will bring his head, wrapped in his vestments, into this room where your wife and yourself are tied, able to see and hear, but helpless and speechless. You will not know what is in the bundle until the right time comes. To you it will be just a bundle on a chair.

"Finally I will bring your daughter here. I will handle her firmly, but gently. She has a beautiful body and I will not harm it in any way, because it is her soul I want to torture. I want her nervous system fully alert to everything that happens. Into her lap, held between her lovely arms, kept from slipping to the floor by her tied hands, I will place the severed head of her brother. And believe me, it will not be the first time she has held that head there. Did you ever ask yourself why such a lovely young woman, rich as well as beautiful, never married? There is your answer, Mr. Hurd, there is your answer!

"And now I ask myself if this is Perkins the butler talking? It is the voice of Perkins but the subconscious thoughts of a Hun. Perkins would never do it, but something tells me that Attila would if he were in conquered Rome.

"Now what? What would there be left for me? I would take that butcher knife and run to your club on Fifth Avenue. For years the same men have been sitting in the same chairs, looking out on the same procession through the same windows. They have never seen suffering, hunger, destitution, sins of the poor, the utter hopelessness of the submerged. They have never been in Harlem or the Bowery. No thought has ever been given to the needy. Their immaculate secretaries have written the checks which they donate routinely to various philanthropies. Every Sunday they walk in high hats and beautiful suits to worship in cathedrals costing millions, but they never see the hungry Christ Child carried in the arms of his ragged Mother Mary.

"Into that club I would go and kill, kill! *kill!* until in turn I was killed by a policeman.

"The actual story of all this would never appear in the papers. Your millions would soften the tale. Just a few lines would state that a butler had suddenly gone insane, murdered the son of a rich family and then killed some important men."

Perkins paused, sweat dripping from his white face.

"I will go now," he said. "After this you will not want me in your service. I intended to leave in a few days anyway. I am sorry I said all this, but you forced me to say whatever came to me, out of the subconscious."

"If you do not mind," replied Hurd softly, "I wish you would stay on. It seems that my family life needs house-cleaning. It will be hard for me to do it alone. You can be of great help to me. I may need your advice. At least stay for a few months longer. Thank you for everything you brought up from the subconscious. It must have been very hard on you. Take the rest of the day off; go over to the Park and feed the seals. You may go now."

The two men were left alone in the library. Hurd turned to his visitor. "That is just a little of the subconscious thought of one man brought to the surface," he remarked. "What do you think of it?"

"It makes me all the more anxious to try the experiment I have in mind. The one I came to see you about. Remember? The eight million white mice?"

"Eight million—Eight million—" mused the banker. "Not all of them reacting like poor Perkins, but everyone bringing up something. It would be interesting. How are you going to do it?"

"My idea is this," the Doctor replied . . .

3

EVEN BLASE NEW YORK was interested in the new gum. Chewing gum was nothing new to them. Advertising was no novelty to the Metropolitans. *But* when the Unnamed Chewing Gum "the finest in the world" started this advertising program neither rich nor poor could help but be aware of it.

It was a gum that was rich in everything except a name. It just had to have a name, and for the proper name the manufacturers were offering exactly one million dollars. That sum was going only to those who either lived or worked in New York City; the outside world was positively

excluded. The rules were very simple. To enter the contest cost nothing but a one cent stamp for a postcard to send in a name. A sample of the gum could be obtained at any drug store; it could be asked for by simply walking up to any one of two thousand beautiful girls on the street, giving name and address, and holding out a hand. Then think of an appropriate name while chewing the gum, write the suggested name on the wrapper with your own name and address, paste it on a postcard and mail it. As simple as that! One hundred thousand persons would receive prizes ranging from \$1.00 up to the grand prize of \$250,000. Five would receive \$50,000 each, while the rest would receive from \$25,000 down to \$1.00. Checks would be mailed in one week.

It was enough to set the tongues of all New York wagging. Full page newspaper advertisements, large billboards, brilliant electric signs and the local radio spread the news. The contest would start Monday morning and close Wednesday night. Sixteen million packages of gum each containing five sticks would be distributed in *one* day. Everyone realized it was the largest thing ever attempted in the field of advertising.

There were many near riots Monday morning when the drug stores opened and the two thousand beautiful girls appeared on the streets. Ten million packages were given out by noon. By evening the supply was exhausted. Weary, almost frantic persons rushed anxiously from one drug store to another hoping that somewhere a stray package might be secured. No estimate could be made of the total number of persons who had secured and chewed the sample but over fourteen million postal cards were sent in by the hopeful applicants for this shower of unearned wealth. Many sent in more than one card, but after duplicate names were discarded it was determined that over eight million had chewed the gum.

Who were they? First and positively they were the great middle class, those on small incomes, who were always looking for every possible method to add a little to their small wealth. The poor also, lacking even the necessities of life, must have tried. The very poor, despondent from repeated failure, may have been indifferent though some at least gambled on the postcard investment. The very rich, the wealthy cream of Metropolitan society, did not need the additional wealth and some must have thought it beneath their dignity to engage in such common gambling. Yet many of these must have chewed the gum without sending in their names.

Exactly nine days after the distribution of the trial packages the checks were mailed to the winners. A morning New York paper carried a full

list of the lucky men and women. Mike Harrity, who won the first prize of a quarter of a million for the name of *Chuchu Chewing Gum*, was interviewed by the papers and went on the air.

"It just came to me," he said over the radio. "It just came to me—just like that. Me and Sally are going to spend that money; you can't take it with you. Gee—it just came to me!"

Now followed something startling which made the advertising men in New York do some thinking. There was nothing more said concerning *Chuchu*, the Wonder Gum. All bills for advertising were paid but no attempt was made to put the gum on sale. Extra workers were discharged, checks for all prizes honored and the bank account closed. Two million dollars spent in a tornado of advertising and no attempt made to capitalize it! No wonder more than one buyer and seller of advertising asked themselves what it all meant. But New York forgets the excitement of one day in the greater excitement of the next, and in a little while practically everyone had forgotten this rather unusual event in advertising history.

While planning the advertising program and preparing the sixteen million packages of free gum, Hurd the banker and Jeremy the Doctor had been in frequent consultation. It would not be exactly true that one furnished the cash and the other the brains. Hurd gave his wealth but at the same time he contributed several ideas of importance. He knew his city far better than the Doctor did. He suggested the two thousand beautiful feminine distributors, and made other valuable contributions to the publicity angle, such as the distribution of the gum in one day.

"I am glad I did it," he remarked to Jeremy. "It gave me something to think about besides my family. We have never talked about them. I did not want to and you were kind enough to respect my silence. You realize that when Perkins operated on me he did not even give me a local anaesthetic. If it had not been for my interest in your experiment there is no telling how I would have reacted. My first thought was to take the family out on my yacht and dynamite it. But you gave me a better idea. I waited till the gum was available and then I arranged to have the three chew some. That was far more scientific, if you can use that term, than simply killing them. In a way it was not very courageous to kill myself. After all I am the husband of this woman and no doubt half to blame for what my children are. Perhaps had I been a better husband and father the woman would have been a finer wife and my children more normal. Some of this horror must be my own fault. Instead of a killer I became a scientific experimenter. What do you think about it?"

"About the best thing you could do, Mr. Hurd. However, you have only the opinion of one man about your family, and there seems to be little to confirm that opinion. I have watched Perkins; he evidently is well educated, but if his story about himself is true he is an odd, unusual character. Why should an Oxford graduate become a butler? Why should he confine his research to one family? He may have included you and your family in an elaborate system of delusional persecution. He may be a Paranoiac. All this has to be considered before we take his statements concerning your family as one hundred per cent truth."

The banker looked eagerly at the man who had become his friend, and asked, with a great longing in his voice. "Do you think that perhaps what he said was not true?"

"I cannot say, but it might not be—it might not be. You gave the required dose of the chemical XYZ to your wife and children. Perkins was probably too highbrow to chew any. At the end of fifteen days, they, like the eight million white mice in New York, will drop down into the subconscious. Then we will know the truth—whether he was right or reacted from a psychotic mind. For then your family will no longer repress their desires. In all this we are acting like true scientists."

"What is going to happen to New York, Doctor?"

"You always ask that question, Mr. Hurd, and as usual I have to reply that I do not know. I am certain of only one thing. *Something very unusual is bound to happen.* As you know we had to work slowly and carefully on this experiment. Can you realize that it has been a year since I forced myself into your library? I had to standardize the dose and then concentrate it so it could be incorporated into a package of gum. It took time to make enough for sixteen million doses. Everything took time. Now we come to the hardest part of the experiment—waiting for the end of the fifteen day period of incubation. Eight million white mice are going to become ill very suddenly, within the space of a few days. Who is wise enough to tell what will happen?"

"I worry about it," mused the banker. "Was it wise?"

"I think it was. For thirty years the world has tried to lower the barrier to the subconscious and see just what was down there. The psychoanalysts insisted that such a knowledge would restore health to those mentally and spiritually ill. But when they lowered the protective gate what happened? Down at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington they experimented with the insane and it resulted in a wave of suicides. The insane killed themselves because they could not face the horror of their subconscious."

"It seems to me that the time has come to teach the human race a lesson. Man has always formed defensive mechanisms against dangerous situations; it must have taken long centuries to build that protective barrier between the conscious and subconscious. Perhaps, when the world learns the lesson that it would be best to lock that door and place a permanent *No Trespassing* sign on it, there will be an end to this unhealthy curiosity about the deep places of our souls.

"The painters may again paint flowers and birds and happy lovers in the moonlight. The sculptors may return to the beautiful and try to duplicate the Venus de Milo instead of carving the feminine form in hideous geometric designs. The poets may sing like music in the pines or waves beating on a rockbound coast instead of uttering stammering repetitions of meaningless sounds. Men and women may find that sex is a wonderful servant instead of a dominant master controlling every phase of life. Love could return to a beautiful experience instead of a corpse dissected by the psychoanalysts."

"At least, Doctor, you have hopes of better life to come."

"Yes. I have to hope for a brave, new world. Otherwise I would be crushed with the weight of responsibility. We, you and I, have deliberately played with the lives and souls of millions. Unless we have the hope that ultimate good will come from it, we would have to kill ourselves before we even saw the beginning of our experiment."

"We will know more about it in a few days," said the banker.



IT WAS THE END OF THE *Chuchu* Gum advertising campaign. In five more days the fifteen day period of incubation would be fulfilled. If a mass lowering of the threshold of consciousness was to take place, if there was any substantial basis to Dr. Jeremy's belief in his chemical XYZ, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers should begin to react at the end of two weeks.

By a complicated delegation of duties both Hurd and Jeremy had skillfully prevented any possibility of being publicly identified with whatever might happen in the city. There remained one more bit of preparation. As usual they engaged a man to secure the services of a man who would find a man. This last man was to hire five skilled reporters—four men and one woman—who were to submit comprehensive daily reports of any interesting thing observed during the twenty-four hour period.

Each man was carefully selected and each proved to be past middle

life; all had, at one time, been noted by signature, but were now more or less in the discard—due to their age.

Harold Smythe of the *Modern Placement Agency* had called them together to give them final instructions.

"I regret, gentlemen," he began, "that the period of your employment will be but two months. However, remembering that none of you have had satisfactory employment for some time, also considering the salary for these two months is more than the average reporter earns in the same period, I feel you are fortunate in getting this job. You need not pay the usual fee—that has been cared for.

"The requirements for this work are not difficult, but they are exacting. A part of each day, for sixty days, you are to spend on the streets observing the life of this great city. Sometime during the twenty-four hour period you are to write a full report of your observations and mail these reports in the envelopes I will give you. These envelopes will be stamped to provide for a maximum of ten typewriter sheets. Reports are expected to be typed but ink or even pencil will be accepted. I am instructed to give you, now, six hundred dollars for the full sixty-day expenses, also to advance one-third of your salary. The remaining two-thirds will be mailed to you at the expiration of the sixty days and the receipt of your last report.

"That is all, gentlemen, unless you have some questions."

"I would like to ask," spoke up Webb, "who is actually paying us for this assignment?"

"As a matter of fact I do not know. Even if I knew, it would have to remain confidential."

"Another question," asked Zanger. "Will our reports ever be printed?"

"That I do not know. Have you always had everything you ever wrote printed? But printed or not, the important thing is you are being paid handsomely for it. That will be all. I congratulate you, gentlemen."

Leaving them he entered his private office. A woman was awaiting him. Introducing herself as Miss Kelly she reminded him of the appointment.

"Yes, I know," he answered, scrutinizing her from head to toe. "So, you are Miss G. G. Kelly, the celebrated feature writer! I understand from your letter—which was one of two hundred I received—that you used to be with a Chicago paper. Evidently you have the nose for news and once you find it you can write it with the human interest touch. You are engaged for two months. Expense money, \$20.00 a day, will be given to you in advance. Salary is \$600.00 a month, one-third in

advance and the balance in sixty days. You are to write on the life, emotions and activities of the New York women and mail your report daily. I will give you stamped and addressed envelopes to use. If there is a change in address you will be notified."

"What paper am I working for?"

"None that I know of. You just write and mail."

"Just write anything I want to?"

"Yes, as long as it is about women."

"Who is paying me?"

"I don't know."

"I do not want the assignment," she said with a snap. "I need the work, but this job looks off color to me. Sorry!"

"Are you certain? Better think it over."

"No."

"Wait a minute," pleaded Smyth. "I will have to phone about your refusal." He dialed.

"Is this Columbus 6-2626?" he asked. "Yes? This is Smyth of The Modern Placement Agency. I want to report. Have just talked to the four reporters you selected and they have all accepted gladly and will be on the job. But Miss Kelly refuses it—The pay is satisfactory, but she thinks it is off color because I cannot give her the name of party paying her. Shall I send for the next woman on the list?"

He listened a while, then hung up. "You are to wait here till he finds out something."

"Were you talking to the man who wants me to do this work?"

"No. That man is just another placement agency. He did all the preliminary work. I just carry out his orders."

"Then you are just the messenger boy?"

"Yes, if that is what you want to call it. Have to make a living and this job paid me rather well."

"Who employed him?"

"How in hell should I know? You ask the stupidest questions!"

"No doubt. For many years I interviewed every celebrity visiting Chicago. This is the first time I ever interviewed just a plain and very ordinary man. However, I will wait for that phone call. I suppose an aging woman is safe in your office?"

The telephone kept Smyth from swearing. He listened, making notes on his pad. "O. K." he said as he dropped the receiver.

"They do not want anyone but you. Seems you have a reputation. I am to give you the expense money and your advance pay. You are

to go to room 1750 of the Hotel New Yorker. There a man will tell you more about the position. No doubt you consider it a position rather than a job. I think you used the word 'assignment'. If you do not want the work, after knowing more about it, you are to leave the checks with him. That is all."

She left the office without even saying goodbye. It seemed they did not like each other. Miss Kelly needed the money. There was food to buy, rent to pay, certainly a new dress, and a decent pair of shoes. Twenty dollars a day expense account, and she could live rather well on ten. But this sudden wealth did not make her walk as though she were twenty-seven instead of fifty-seven.

As she moved through the crowds, she thought, "Holy Cow! Saved by a hair. Two hundred applications and I got it on my reputation and I got it easily. I had three dollars thirty minutes ago. Wonder if I look old? Old as I felt this morning?" She paused to peer in a gum machine mirror. A touch of lipstick; re-arching of eyebrows with a tongue-moistened finger. Smiling with satisfaction at the results she went on her way. "Guess I'll have a steak to celebrate—haven't had one for a dog's age."

Refreshed after a hearty meal she bought, and put on, a pair of sheer nylons, stopped at an automatic polisher for a shine and then went to room 1750 at the New Yorker.

A man opened the door—a man not so old and not so young. He looked tired.

"I am Miss Kelly," she said. "I was sent here by the Modern Placement Agency. Are you the man I am to see?"

"Yes. My name is Dr. Jeremy. I understand you hesitated about accepting the position because you thought it was off color in some way. Is that right?"

"Yes. Of course I want work, need it; but it has to be the right kind of work for the right people. I always walk around a rat trap three times before touching the bait."

Jeremy smiled. "It would be better, if more of us did that. We advertised for a woman reporter, and sent questions to those who answered. There were about two hundred replies. I read them myself. I considered only three of them seriously and the more I studied these three, the more certain I was that you were the one I wanted. I presume your answers were all honest?"

"No. They were not. I lowered my age from fifty-seven to Forty-five. I raised my education from grammar school to a two year course in Journalism in a little, western college that is no longer in existence. I

said my last position paid me six thousand a year, but it was paying me sixty dollars a week. I was selling perfume."

"I understand," said the Doctor softly. "All of us who live long enough grow old. Was all the rest true? Your work in Chicago? Can you still write as you used to?"

"I am certain that after a few good meals I'll get into my stride again. It will be good to get back at my own trade?"

"Fine. Now about that chewing gum contest. Did you taste it? Did you try for one of the cash prizes?"

"I did not. All my life I have worked hard for a living. But never a cent would I take from anyone that I did not earn. I am not a grafter! The whole affair looked sour to me and I wanted none of it. I never chew gum but if I wanted to I'd buy it; not have it given to me with a fantastic hope of riches behind it."

"That is what I wanted to know, Miss Kelly. Now in regard to your work—". She interrupted him. "I did not come to see what the work was or whether I could do it. If it is special feature writing I can do it, and that is the truth. What I wanted to know is who is paying me. I want to know why I am offered so much money. I need it—do you know what it is to be poor and alone in New York? To be told again and again that you are too old? God and His Saints know I need the money, but I must earn it honestly."

"I understand. It is this way, Miss Kelly! Another man, very rich, and myself, rather poor, are interested in the women of New York. We believe that within a few days these women will act in various peculiar and interesting ways. For two months we want the women observed, written up; we want a woman to do this for us. She has to be a single woman to be wise and young enough to feel the emotional reactions of millions of her sisters. She has to write about the hopes and fears, sins, loves and hatreds of women. You are the one I selected, and the longer I talk to you the more certain I am that I made a wise choice. We are taking care of the masculine side of our sociological study. However, our four male reporters do not care for whom they work."

"That is all there is to it. You may consider that you are doing this work for me, if that will please you. I suppose you have an apartment?"

"Yes, one room in Astoria."

"Here is my advice. Pack your clothes and bring them and your typewriter down here. The Hotel will cash your check tomorrow. Stay here for the next two months. I may want to see you now and then. I want to give you some money to outfit yourself. Then watch for news

and write. You may be writing history. But whatever you write, Miss Kelly, I am sure you will write it better than a woman half your years could. Here is something extra for clothing and a wish for health and happiness, because I think you are a brave woman, and when you smile you do not look a day over thirty-five."

"Thanks. That was a nice thing to say. I won't mind working for you, Dr. Jeremy, because—well—just because—perhaps simply because you look as tired as I feel."

"I am. Have not been sleeping very much; been so busy today doing this and that, that I have forgotten to eat."

"I thought there was something wrong with you. If you are wise you will eat and right now. Suppose we make it a Dutch treat? Start with a martini, then some real food and end with a demi-tasse." -

"It is a date," answered Jeremy with a little smile. "It will be perfectly proper. I am nearly sixty but feel old enough to be your father."

"This morning," answered Miss Kelly, "I felt old enough to be your great-grand-mother. Now with money in my pocket and a job for the morrow I have become young enough to be your sister. You are a fine man, and there are not many fine men in the world, Dr. Jeremy. I ought to know."

The next morning Jeremy sat with Hurd in the banker's library. They were listening to morning news.

The radio told of world events, startling, thrilling, humorous with a human interest climax. The program ended with. *For the last twenty-four hours nothing has happened in New York of any special interest. Fools have married, babies have been born, men have died, but nothing really important has happened. When a man bites a dog in this city our invisible audience can be certain that they will be the first to hear of it over the Universal Network. Be sure to tune in tonight for our Six O'clock Broadcast of the latest news. This is Pete Pattering speaking for the Peterson Perfect Performers, Nature's Natural Nutritive Fluids.*

"And that is the news for the day," commented Hurd. "In a few days it may be more exciting, or it may not be. I imagine how you feel. You had an idea about a new chemical. You wanted to try it on eight million white mice—human beings, but still only mice, as far as you were concerned. In a few days you think it should begin to work. We have five reporters walking the streets seeking news. What will they report on the first day? Will it be, *'All quiet on the Broadway Front'*? At least it has been interesting so far. We poured the chemical XYZ

into eight million test tubes. Will there be eight million explosions or nothing?"

"I am certain something will happen," insisted the Doctor. "We have to give the chemical time to work. In my Labrador experiment the men were not reactive on the fifteenth day. Took them a little time to reach the bottom of the Abyss."

The scientist paused for a few minutes. Hurd lit a fresh cigar.

"There is one point that presents a definite problem," said Jeremy family. "I wanted the individual dose to be sufficient to push the threshold of consciousness back two thousand years. But though I knew the exact dose necessary, I could not be certain that everyone would take that amount and no more. Knowing human nature as I do it seemed certain that a definite percent would get as many packages as possible. That is why I had so many scattered distributing centers, arranging allotments so all packages could be given away in one day.

"I was certain that even with this precaution thousands would obtain and chew two or more packages. That knowledge made it necessary to put only one-half a dose in each package of gum.

"That means some of the white mice will go back one thousand years and some two thousand years. Many of the greedy will go back five thousand years or even ten. But the average slip backwards should be about two thousand years."

"I hope," said the banker with smile, "that I will have something to show for my investment. Here is something I should have told you before. You have your checking account I opened for you and there should be enough there to pay all our obligations for the period of the experiment. But after you pay the bills there will not be much left. So I want to give you some money in cash. Put it in a safety deposit box and for a while forget it. Then, if anything happens to me you will be provided for. You are not young and I want you to be comfortable in your old age."

"That is very kind, but not at all necessary, Mr. Hurd."

"I know, but you might have trouble if I die during this experiment. I have more money than anything else—and the family won't miss what I am giving you. Of course they will never know about it. I worry about my wife and children at times; wonder how they will act when the chemical starts working on them. At least good old Perkins is safe. I cannot imagine him doing such a vulgar thing as chewing gum."

"How is he?"

"Fine. I am smoking his brand of cigars now, and that pleases him a lot."

"I should think it would," responded Jeremy.

5

DR. JEREMY LOOKED AT THE CALENDAR on the wall. He was counting the days till the first of the gum chewers would take their plunge into the Abyss. During the months of planning, the weeks of feverish preparation, the days of consultation with Hurd, he had found little time for contemplative thought. Now there was nothing to do but wait.

All papers relative to the preparation and distribution of sixteen million doses of the Chemical XYZ in as many packages of chewing gum had been destroyed. Only he knew the formula of XYZ and that knowledge existed only in his memory. The secret was safe. The hardest thing was to wait; the next hardest not to talk about it.

He had little to do except think. With three days remaining, Jeremy, after reviewing every step of the preparation, was now trying to forecast the future. As is often the case he was talking to himself, thinking out loud.

"Within the next week," he said, "about eight million persons in a comparatively small environment will begin to form a new pattern of living based on the influence of their subconscious by the lowering of the barrier.

"Great and inexplicable mass conduct has taken place before in the world's history; but this the first time it has been deliberately planned. The world has seen migrations, such as the flight of the Tartars; the sudden conquest of Northern Africa and Spain by the Arabs, almost in a generation. A dark people left Asia in little boats and swarmed over the islands of the Pacific. With only a legendary Cross to guide them, waves of Crusaders rushed into Asia Minor and, like waves, rushed back again. Similar events take place in the animal and bird kingdom. The lemmings march by millions westward through Scandinavia, and finally meet death swimming to an ancestral home now submerged beneath the seas. The birds migrate to nest; the Canadian caribou march in great herds every fall seeking winter forage.

"In every great mass movement of the human race there has been a symbol. The Crusaders had the Cross, the Arabs the Crescent. The Spanish invaders of America used the word *Gold*, the Protestants the

word *Liberty*, but always there was something on which all could unite, understand and die for.

"We are soon to have a movement downwards into the subconscious. It is going to be different from any other mass movement because it is certain to be largely mental. It will have to be expressed in various forms of human behavior but it will churn within itself rather than move into other environments. If my idea of ancestral memory is correct it will be a mass movement composed of conflicting smaller units. The history of New York as a melting-pot is so recent that there has been no time for the formation of a common ancestral memory. Here are large groups, Nordic, Mediterranean, Asiatic, African and Semetic. It is reasonable to suppose that each will adopt a symbol which will in some way express their own individual type of reaction to this downward journey into the past.

"Somehow there should be one symbol they could all unite on in the mass hysteria of the city. It cannot be religious, for there are too many forms of worship. It cannot be either sociological or political, for so much of these reaction types are relatively modern. It must then be something which is older than written history and yet new. I wish I knew more about symbolism. There must be something, a picture, perhaps, that in a single glance will express the entire madness which will start soon; something which will serve as a picture slogan; a symbol as powerful as the phrases 'There is but one God and Mohammed is His Prophet,' 'Give me liberty or give me death,' or 'Making the world safe for democracy.' I wonder who could help me."

With that question his mind he tried to relax by reading the evening papers. In one he found the answer to his problem. A very celebrated Austrian scientist had that day arrived in New York seeking refuge from oppression. The very short paragraph stated he was, beyond doubt, the world's leading authority on symbolism, rich in the folklore of the world but poor in the world's goods. It was hoped he might secure a position in some university.

Jeremy looked at his watch. It was past ten o'clock. He knew he could not sleep so started the hunt for Professor Jungers. The search ended in a fifth rate hotel at two o'clock in the morning.

"I have been but a few hours in your country," commented the hardly awake Austrian, "but in those few hours I must confess I have become, primarily, astonished at the conduct of you Americans. I am roused from sleep by a physician who says he wants to talk with me and offers in compensation for his bad manners, twenty-five dollars an hour. With all

of life before him he calmly explains he cannot wait for daylight. It is all very unusual. Perhaps you are an unusual man, Doctor Jeremy."

"I doubt that," answered the physician. "Just about average. You came to this hotel this evening and went to bed. No one visited you until I came. Had you been a banker or politician, a great author or a celebrated musician, a mass of reporters would have broken down your door for interviews. A hundred photographers would have taken as many pictures of you in so many minutes. Had you been a movie actor worshipped by our women, they would have torn off your clothes for souvenirs, mangling your face with their kisses.

"But you are only a wise man and your wisdom is in a field unfamiliar to all but comparatively few, so your arrival occupies only a few lines in the afternoon paper and you are left alone. I sought you because I felt certain you could give me the information I need. I could not sleep; I could not wait until morning, so I came at night. It seemed perhaps you might need money more than sleep. But lie on the bed if you are tired, but listen to my problem and help me. I want a symbol. This is the reason."

For over thirty minutes Dr. Jeremy talked, telling everything except the sixteen million doses of Chemical XYZ slowly transforming eight million white mice in New York. For thirty minutes Professor Jungers listened in complete silence. Even after Jeremy had finished he sat thinking five or more minutes. Then he spoke at length.

"This symbol you are looking for will have to be very old; it will have to date back to the time when there were no races of men but simply one form of human animal. It must represent something all those human animals knew something about. What were the basic motives on which they must all have united? Probably not more than two. One was the preservation of the individual and the other preservation of the race. Regarding the first: what did they fear? Cold, hunger and the enemy attacks. To live they needed shelter, fire, food, water and some form of garment, perhaps, and surely better arms and greater dexterity than the enemy. Those who first invented the spear could kill those who only had clubs. That is true today. The nation which discovers a newer, more frightful and deadly weapon wins the war.

"But all this is complicated. From one motive we have secured several separate ones, each of which had a symbol. For example: we have the cave which is the symbol of safety, doubtless also representing the uterine home, the place of perfect safety. We have fire; that led to the wor-

ship of the sun. Then we have blood, the perfect symbol of life. Any of these could be used as modern symbols representing ancient and common world-thought and at one time or another they have all been used, leading mankind to adventure, conquest and final destruction. I fear, though, none of these are what you desire.

"Now let us consider the second of very ancient life-motives. This was the preservation of the family, the herd, tribe and the race. All these, of necessity, are bound up with sex. Our modern scientists think sex very important, finding sex symbols in church spires, lead pencils and asparagus. In Vienna I cannot walk five minutes with a psycho-analysist without having a dozen such sex-symbols shown me. But I do not think that it was so with ancient man. Sex was important, but certainly not so constantly in his thought as it appears to be today. Surely they had their seasons of sexual indulgence, but between these periods there were long intermissions of continence imposed by various tribal taboos. Children were procreated at one time of the year, just as are the birds and animals. Babies were created in the late spring, the time of warmth and abundance, they were born in early spring so they might grow a little before the rigor of long winter.

"Here were two forms of life; male and female. Perhaps back of that there was only one form, hermaphroditic, like the snails, and further back in creation's history there might have been just multiplication, like the budding of the amoeba.

"I feel that in some way this symbol you are seeking will need to be, mainly, a sexual one. But it will have to be feminine. The human race, as we see it now, has come up through millions of years from a one-celled, undifferentiatedly sexed, organism. Of that journey we have a written, a pictorial, history which many date back twenty-five thousand years before Christ, but perhaps not that long. We have a fair idea of the life and activity, the hopes and fears, dreams and even of the religions of these people, like the Cro-Magnon race. The cave paintings of France tell much of the story of their culture. However I would like to go back further yet, and in so doing I must use my imagination trying to draw a picture of a human culture based on the sex habits of other forms of life.

"Using this method of thinking there must have been a time when the forebears of the human race were entirely dominated by the female. The male was small, insignificant and entirely useless except for purposes of propagation. What was the female like? No one knows; but we do know this: She brought forth her young alive; she nursed them; she had

powerful muscles and her head was larger than that of the male. Her intelligence was greater than the male's, therefore a larger forehead which did not recede from the nose backward as did the male's. A picture of such a female could be used as a very ancient sex symbol of the subconscious. If only we had an artist to draw it as I see it."

"We have it!" exclaimed Jeremy in excitement, "It has been painted by Picasso, *The Woman and the Rooster*. I saw it some months ago. The woman is seated in a chair. She has a large forehead that rises precipitously from her nose. Her breasts are enormous and so are her hips. The muscles of arms and legs are so large that they are more anatomical monstrosities than means of movement. A rooster lies on his back in her lap, helpless in her powerful grasp. Modern art has gone deeply into the subconscious. There is a female such as you have fancied. The feminine anatomy has been emphasized to a height that makes her pure fantasy.

"Do you see where the male is? On her lap! He is masculine, but he is her prisoner. She needs the male to procreate but after that she will kill and eat him. Is that your symbol?"

"Very close to it. It is a very ancient symbol of primitive sex relation, universal to all early life, but it has been made modern, brought down to our day by a psychotic artist. It is something that the modern female will understand and adopt, though the men will hate it and fight against it. But there should be a trace of something more ancient in it, something expressive of the time before men, the age of hermaphroditism or even feminine parthenogenesis. Did you tell me all about the picture?"

Jeremy thought for a few minutes: "No," he answered at last. "There was something else. Perhaps I forgot it because I could not understand it. The woman's face was in profile with two eyes on the left side of her head. Two eyes! The face of a foetal monstrosity."

Dr. Jungers was so excited that he left his bed and began pacing the floor. "That is what we need to make it perfect!" he exclaimed. "I do not understand what it means but it would be easy for women to adopt it as a symbol. Two eyes on the left side! Perhaps an eye on the right side—perhaps not. The painting makes man a pitiful creature, but they were at that time. Two eyes on the left face! To me there is something of terror in that thought. It suggests a feminine nature utterly cruel, devoid of all pity. Do not ask me why I think so, for I do not know.

"I can explain and perhaps forgive the enlarged frontal lobes of the brain, the bovine breasts, the fecund hips, the massive muscles, but those eyes frighten me. I think that if the human race would drop the sub-

conscious without repression, as you suggested in your initial question, that the women could easily take all this, especially the two eyes on the left face, as a symbol. If they followed that symbol anything could happen. You asked me to suggest a symbol that would show the complete drop of humanity into the Abyss of the subconscious. We have such a symbol, but it has only feminine appeal. Perhaps the men do not count, and that is of no importance, for at the bottom of this subconscious pit the female ruled supreme. What would happen to men in this year of our Lord if women resumed that rule?"

"Are you going to stay in New York?" asked Jeremy.

"Perhaps. I do not know."

"Would you consider working for me for two months at five hundred a month?"

"I would do that. It is a great deal of money and I need it. What is the work?"

"Simply keep in touch with me. Correlate reports sent to you by some reporters, add your own impressions of life in this city, and send me the condensed report daily. Here is \$50.00 for this interview."

6

DR. JEREMY RETURNED TO HIS HOTEL ROOM and tried to sleep. Perhaps he did, or it might be that a dream came to him in the twilight of consciousness. By seven o'clock that morning he was fully dressed, gulping many cups of coffee after which he spent an hour drawing a picture, childish in form, primitive in outline, but sufficiently good to convey his idea. His dream had been but a continuation of his conversation with Professor Jungers. When he had finished the sketch he called Mr. Hurd who agreed to the urgency of his plea to see him at once.

Without preamble he spoke of his subject in an excitement-tensed voice: "I have something new; something I know will be of the greatest interest. Things, momentous things, are going to take place in New York in a few days—a mass psychological movement. You have spent over two million dollars to bring it about. Every movement of a similar nature has, in the past, always had some central theme, some symbol, to bind the masses together. Perhaps it might have been better to wait for the eight million white mice to develop their own symbol, but I became impatient, wondering just what it might be. Very early this morning I talked with the greatest authority on symbolism in the world, Professor Jungers of

Vienna. He had just arrived in New York. He suggested something like this might be accepted, certainly by the female mice. This is my drawing of our conception of the symbol. What do you think of it?"

The banker stared, bewildered, at the drawing. "Either you two are insane or I am," he said flicking the paper away from him disgustedly.

"I thought you would say that. I paid fifty dollars for that idea. Went even further than that, for I engaged the Professor at five hundred dollars a month to remain in New York for the next two months and write daily impression of the city's life. Personally, I think it is cheap at the figure. Of course he has no idea of what we expect because I told him nothing of the experiment, but when the reactions begin his description will be of the utmost value for he will be an eyewitness of importance and learning.

"Please be patient. At the present a European ballet is giving unusual entertainment to the blase metropolitans. Every night from two to three thousand people sit through the performance trying to understand it. I saw it last week. One of the ballets shows a psychoanalytical representation of life in Venusburg. Wagner revived the ancient folklore. Beardsley started a novel on the theme, the visit of Tannhauser to Venus, but he finished only a few chapters. Now an ultra-modern composer has written a ballet around the story.

"During the performance many things happen, some of which are rather beautifully horrible due to their subconscious import. It is like a confused dream, a fantastic nightmare, in which many unrelated things occur at the same time, yet seem to correlate, fusing into a phantasmagoria of horror — and beauty.

"I have looked up the composer. He is not rich. The Impresario is not making money — large attendance but terrific overhead. For a few thousand I think he might be induced to make a slight addition to the Tannhauser Ballet. This is what I have in mind . . . "

With a rapid flow of graphic phrases Jeremy outlined the new scene.

"Now I am satisfied that you *are* mad," laughed Hurd.

"Certainly, I am definitely mad! But think of the audience! What will be their reaction? Everyone will ask themselves *What does it mean?* The next morning the critics will devote much space to it. From then on every seat will be sold; it will be the talk of the town. What will be the result? Overnight the burlesque houses will have a similar ballet; every strip-tease show will have some variation of this feature. Night clubs, swanky and drab, will fall into line.

"The women will adopt the new style aided and encouraged by the

manufacturers. Ordinarily it would be a passing fancy but by the time it reaches its height millions of women will be reacting to Chemical XYZ. The Professor says it has the value of ultra-modern expression combined with very ancient motivations. I think we should try it. A thousand more dollars won't hurt you. Will you consider it?"

"Are you sure that you did not take any of that Chemical?"

"Positive!"

"The Austrian Professor supports and encourages you?"

"Yes. Of course it was my own idea to spread the two-eyed symbol. It occurred to me after I left him."

"All right—go ahead with it. I will pay the bills. Might as well, but frankly, it seems the most fantastic of the whole experiment. Sometimes the entire undertaking seems absurdly audacious. I will be greatly relieved when the waiting period is ended. It is the suspense that is hurting me most."

At once Dr. Jeremy contacted the managers of the Ballet. To them five thousand dollars for a slight addition to one routine seemed a gift from Heaven. The composer was delighted but said frankly his pride was badly hurt that he had not thought of it first and he could kick himself for his stupidity. The selection of the male dancer was easy but not so simple to find the right female for the part. However after a day's search they succeeded. The routine was not complicated thus, but a few hours rehearsal were necessary. The first performance of the startling addition to the Tannhauser scene was given Saturday evening.

For some weeks audiences had been thrilled by *Rouge et Noir*, interested by *Ghost Town*, entertained by *Gaite Parisienne* but puzzled and somewhat stunned by the *Bacchanal of Venusburg*, which always drew good crowds. Tonight the house was practically sold out, for once seen, people returned again and again trying to discover the exact meaning of it all. Each had their own explanation and these varied from learned opinions written by grandiose critics to the general conception that it was all just so much damned nonsense.

Hints to the critics that something startling was to be seen that night had failed to bring them to see a performance they had already written up. Blake of the *Tattler* was the only theatrical critic present, mainly because he was mildly drunk, bored, no current love affair and thought he might as well sleep there as anywhere. Thus, through neither sense of duty nor real fault of his own he secured a scoop. His article, written red hot in the *Tattler* office immediately after the first fall of the golden curtains, remains a model of critical analysis. That he was still drunk

when he wrote it may account for his keen insight and realization that he had just seen a performance with far deeper meaning than could be comprehended by the average theatergoer.

Mr. and Mrs. Hurd, Dr. Jeremy and Professor Jungers occupied the Hurd box. Mrs. Hurd did not share the knowledge that anything spectacularly unusual was to be seen. She was terribly bored and utterly furious at her husband for his unyielding and insistant demand that she attend the Ballet for she had planned the spend the evening with her latest flame, a long-haired, impecunious musician. She consoled herself with the thought that night did not end until morning, thus there would be some hours salvaged.

Dr. Jeremy had bought a ticket in the family circle for Miss Kelly which he enclosed in a note to her, half apologizing for the location of the seat but explaining that he did want her to see the performance but did not know if she was fully prepared for the dress circle.

To the student of human behavior the reaction of the audience to this night's performance might have been most interesting. No one had sufficient width of vision to take in the entire stage, just as there is utter inability to simultaneously watch all that goes on in a three ring circus. Doubtless some saw little except the man knitting and the little boy constantly winding the ball of yarn. Others watched the beautiful Venus, even after her metamorphosis into a fish. Some concentrated on Louis II of Bavaria, madly fancying himself to be Tannhauser; while the sexually abnormal envied Sacher Masoch, tormented by his sadistic wife. At last the usual finale, leaving the audience grasping, bewildered. But almost instantly the golden velvet curtains parted and rose again—on a stage empty save for a chair.

From the left wing strutted a colorful rooster; a very proud bird he was, certain of his allure, confident of his virility. There was nothing in the whole wide world for him to fear. He preened and crowed, flapping his wings. Then from the other side came a woman, and what a woman! Her torso seemed but two large spheres resting on two larger ones. Though dwarfed in comparison, her limbs were huge, grotesque, with powerful bulging muscles. She was all female and all powerful. But it was her head that stunned the audience. She had two eyes on her left face: her forehead was square and massive. Walking slowly she rolled each hip in turn, with a tortured, waddling gait, as though her legs, for all their accentuated muscles, were unable to carry the great weight of the four globes super-imposed on them. Her arms dangled at her sides, the fingers touching the knees.

She fixed her two left eyes in an hypnotic stare on the bird. He started to quiver; his tail feathers fell; his head dropped. He started to run from her but as panic grew in him, he ran in ever-contracting circles until he was very close to her. Finally she caught him and, seated on the chair, held him on her lap, feet in the air, his neck bending backward until his comb nearly touched the floor. Holding his legs together with one hand she fastened the fingers of the other around his neck. A few convulsive struggles and he was dead!

All the house was dark except for the spotlight which played over the woman and the dead cockerel. She sat with left eyes towards the audience, the one near the nose remaining open, motionless. Slowly the other eye near the ear, winked, the woman smiled knowingly as the spotlight blacked out.

The whole theater was as silent as an empty cavern. The audience sat stupified. As the lights flooded the auditorium, sobs and hysterical laughter swelled into crescendo. Then the delayed applause, wild, tumultuous applause; but it was the women who were shouting their approval. The men sat silent, dazed.

"I will take you to your hotel, Professor," Mr. Hurd said as they inched through the crowd. "Mrs. Hurd will use the car for her other engagement so we will take a taxi. Doctor, will you join me at home? I would like very much to talk with you."

Perkins served them with cocktails as they sat in the banker's library.

"Well, what did you think of it?" asked the Doctor when they were alone.

"When that rooster died," Hurd replied slowly, "I felt my wife's fingers around my throat."

At the hotel Dr. Jeremy found a note tucked under his door. It was brief and to the point. *Thanks for the show Doctor. Holy Cow! What a show! G. G. Kelly.*

7

AFTER LEAVING DR. JEREMY, Miss Kelly returned to the Astoria. There she looked over her wardrobe preparatory to moving to the New Yorker. She was not at all satisfied with her dresses.

"Well, Gert," she said out loud. "What you have was good enough in the old days. but not now, with the kind of job you have. You will have to go places and see things. May even have a chance to visit the Stork Club, though the Doctor looked as though he spent most of

his nights in his hotel room. It would do him good to have a change. I guess I will buy just a few necessary items, and settle down to work. Later on some party dresses."

She blushed as she realized her interest in the new Boss.

The following Monday she decided to devote most of the day shopping, beginning with a new foundation. Expensive? Sure! But maybe not too high a price if the desired end was achieved.

Pausing to admire the natural platinum fox jacket in the window of *La Parisienne* she noticed a man who was evidently confused. Twice he almost entered the pseudo-obsidian building and twice retreated, the last time pushing back his broad brimmed Stetson and wiping his pre-spining face. Finally, after hitching up his belt a notch, he disappeared through the glass door.

In a moment she followed him into that feminine world. The beauty of it made her gasp. There stood the man, obviously ill at ease, surrounded by ornate decorations of the Louis XV period. The room was a replica of a salon except for a black velvet dais. A woman, obviously the hostess, was talking to the man and evidently asking him questions. The man fidgeted and finally said loudly in the broad speech of the far west:

"Ma'am, just show me what you got here for women to wear. If they're ladylike, and look good to me I'll buy them. As for morning, afternoon or evening dresses, I don't know what's the difference."

His distressed eyes met the smiling ones of Miss Kelly. Taking a diffident step towards her he spoke, face flushing.

"Pardon me, Lady, but you look kind and honest. I need help. I want to get an outfit for a lady back in Montana. She's about your age and she's—" digging into his coat pocket he brought out a piece of paper—" Here's the sizes she wrote down for me. It says 'Size twenty in good dresses but forty in the less expensive.' You know what she means?"

"Yes, I know what she means and I will be really delighted to help you. Shopping is hard for a man, though most women love it."

The hostess smiled most ingratiatingly, but, as she looked at Miss Kelly, her eyes belied the smile. She thought: "She is either a copyist, a freak or a poor fool trying to kid herself and me. She'll have us parade the whole shop and then say she's sorry but there is simply nothing suitable to her type. Damn her kind!"

In the meantime Tom Lang was telling Gert Kelly how, as a very young man, he had gone to Montana at the time copper was "just

beginning to boom"; how he had "found a little mine that paid out real nice." During the years he had established a home with a housekeeper, but had never married. "Lucy Gower is her name, and she makes me mighty comfortable too."

Fingering the paper he still held he began to laugh, the tension all gone from manner and voice. "It was funny the way she gave me this thing. Just before I got on the train she said, 'Here's my measurements, Tom, whether it's a ring or a dress you get for a present. I hear them New York women are wild so be careful.' I told her I'd take care but I doubted if I'd find any wilder than she'd be if she ever started to howl."

The hostess, Miss Estelle, taking advantage of the mutual absorption of her customers, slipped into the office of Madame Charlene, formerly Bridget Tynam.

"Madame, I need your assistance. We have a gold mine of a man out there but some old hag has butted in and she will spoil a magnificent sale! I just know it! Can you happen out, in about five minutes?"

"Most certainly. Thank you, Estelle."

"Are you ready to make selections?" Miss Estelle asked as Lang and Kelly stopped talking long enough to catch their breath. They were first-naming each other now.

"Gert, you tell her what we want," said Lang.

"O. K." To Miss Estelle, the easily recognized gold-digging expert, she said, "We would like to see daytime, afternoon, cocktail, informal and formal and evening gowns; something alluring and dainty, but not too daring."

"Yes, Madame," replied the hostess, bowing and smiling.

As she turned to advise the dressers regarding selections she muttered, "She don't need to tell me what to show! I know how to loosen up that old check-book."

Before she had taken more than a few steps Tom called, "Oh Miss! Just a moment, please. Could we see these--- what you call evening gowns first?"

"Most certainly, sir." Miss Estelle's tone was triumphant.

Turning to Gert, Tom whispered. "You know it just dawned on me about the ring. Guess Lucy thinks I'm a dope! When I get back I'll show her the mistake she made, by thunder!"

"We are very proud to show Madame and Monsieur our creations," a continental voice spoke besides them. Looking up they saw a tall, very dark woman exquisitely groomed and tailored.

"I am Madame Charlene," the woman continued. "When I saw you I knew at once I should pleasure to attend your desires in person. Here are the mannequins."

From the folds of a heavy, black, velvet curtain came the first of the most beautiful models in all New York—every one a Follies type—for Madame Charlene knew that beauty of face and figure—not intelligence—appealed to the masculine, loosening his money-fingers, while each feminine customer saw herself in the form of the model.

Onto the slightly sloping ramp moved a girl with bronze-auburn hair, the pearly skin of shoulders and arms enhanced by a strapless black moire taffeta; fitted bodice, skirt slightly bouffant. The taffy colored hair and blue eyes of the next girl topped corn-flower blue jersey, softly draped in the bodice while the skirt was peg-top, flaring open as she walked.

Just before their summons for this showing the girls had been talking about the recent gum naming contest. Each had told how they had gotten many samples, sending in the wrappers with not only their own name but fictitious ones as well; what they would have done had they won the grand prize; each being sure their name-suggestion should have been selected—look at the dopes that won hundreds of thousands of dollars in the sweepstake and numbers lotteries—and *Chuchu* was really common, such a name!

All but Marta Tseagaris—she had been on a late party Sunday night and Monday, being her day off, she had slept until late afternoon. Though she had dashed from place to place she was able to find only two packages of the delicious gum. All the girls agreed with Marta it was too bad that *Chuchu* gum was not yet on the market in quantity.

Thus nine of Madame Charlene's mannequins had taken a massive dose of the Chemical XYZ, but Marta only sufficient to lower her two thousand years into the abyss.

Of course Marta couldn't know it, but in the two-thousand-year-ago period one of her ancestors had been a famous Greek courtesan, from whom she had inherited a beautiful body and exquisite olive coloring. Now as she prepared to display, not only the very daring red gown, but her own, individual, charms which were startlingly revealed by the clinging spun-glass fabric, she felt an almost uncontrollable surge of uninhibited desires.

The first nine models came down the ramp, paraded, pausing and turning, before Mr. Lang and Miss Kelly, then mounted the dais for further consideration by the customers. But something was wrong—their

postures were impossible! Instead of swaying and graceful, their movements were rigid, arms hanging as if wooden and a dull expression replaced the usual smile. Once on the platform one girl froze in the half-completed step and stood thus gazing fixidly at her out-stretched fingers; another fell to her knees, prostrating herself in the manner of Arabs at prayer; two sat tailor fashion, ripping their gowns into fine shreds which they piled in heaps between their knees. The rest of the girls slumped to the floor dropping their heads between their knees, slender arms clasped around shapely legs.

Miss Estelle's hand flew to her open mouth, stifling a horrified shriek. Madame Charlene, standing beside the man from Butte, swayed and felt that her world had been struck by a thunderbolt. Miss Kelly leaned forward, eagerly, for this was really something, rapidly indelibly imprinting the whole picture on her receptive mind. Lang, much astonished, whispered to Miss Kelly: "What are they doing, Gert? That's a hell of a way to show off dresses!"

"Quiet!" she commanded. "This is news—front page news—if I know anything."

Then came Marta Tseagaris, swaying her lithe body ever so slightly. Over her seductive gown she had thrown a sable jacket, open in front, enhancing her own enticement. Her smile was directed at the big, bronzed, watching man. Even if he was from Montana he understood its meaning and the invitation in her eyes.

Gliding, rather than walking, across the floor she stood before him a moment, undulating her hips, spun around in a dance step, and slipping the furs back, leaving her shoulders very bare, she leaned toward him, placing her slender fingers on his knees, her fragrant lips almost touching his.

Tom Lang sat as if petrified, hardly breathing. Excited hunger filled his eyes.

"How about a little party, Sugar Boy?" Marta whispered huskily.

"Suits me fine," answered Lang, rising.

Completely oblivious to everything around them they walked out of *La Parisienne*, she clinging to his arm, telling him what a bold man he was. He unable to think of anything except her tantalizing nearness.

"You filthy pigs! You devils! Sluts, all of you!" screamed Madame Charlene. "You drive away my customers and ruin my gowns! I'll fix you—" seizing a chair she brought it down, heavily, on the unresisting heads of her girls.

She also had chewed the gum.

Kelly watched a moment, slipping away unnoticed. "Holy Cow and Hells bells!" she exclaimed, "Dr. Jeremy said he wanted reports of feminine interest—he'll get *one* anyway. But he never suspected anything like this! I wonder just what made those gals act that way?"

8

FOUR MEN, EACH AN EXPERT in observing human behavior, walked the streets of New York hunting for something unusual to write about. One woman, trained for years to find stories of startling human interest, ate a hearty breakfast, congratulated herself on having a well paying job, and said to herself:

"G. G. Kelly, you actually look younger. Bills all paid, ample expense account—and you are working for a very interesting man. I wonder if he is married. He should have a woman to look after him. I bet he doesn't eat enough."

An old Professor from Vienna, almost hopeless over the future happiness of the world, but glad that he was doing something to support himself, left his shabby hotel. He wanted to learn all he could about the unusual people he had adopted as his neighbors.

A Doctor, keyed to the point of near collapse, dashed down several cups of coffee, glanced hastily over the paper, tossed it aside, lit a cigaret and walked slowly through the mass of humanity on Thirty-fourth Street. A rich banker wondered whether he should spend the day at home, at one of his clubs, or in his office.

Eight persons checking the life a great city!

Dr. Jeremy felt the hopelessness of trying to observe that life from all viewpoints. He had left his hotel Monday morning determined to walk until he saw something he could not understand, anything new and unusual. Then he would follow that clue to its ultimate end. Something drew him to Third Avenue. There seemed to be more than the usual number of beggars; they were more insistent, whined louder and longer. Here and there, on the curb, against the houses, propped on telephone poles and light standards sat men and women, their faces buried between their knees and their arms wrapped around ankles. The Doctor studied them. Their eyes were closed, breathing shallow, faces emotionless.

"That is the foetal position," he whispered. "I wonder if those on the brink of dementia praecox would not drop very deep into the Abyss on a dose that would send the average person back only two thousand

years? In three blocks I have passed a dozen persons who look absolutely like catatonics."

Along came a policeman. He paused near one of the sleepers sitting on the curbstone. "Move on," he ordered. "Move on, you scum!"

The sleeper did not move. The policeman raised his club hitting him on the skull just once. The sleeper dropped into the gutter. Spitting at him, the officer moved on. Jeremy followed him: This was what he had been waiting for. In three short blocks he saw the officer fracture five skulls. Two of these sleepers, who had been propped against houses, were first hit, then dragged to the gutter and left there. By devious turnings the officer finally arrived at Columbus Circle.

There one man had the attention of a large crowd. He was a tall man with a powerful voice. Jeremy listened attentively.

"How much longer are you going to be slaves? Shall we die for the profit of the rulers of this city? I had a friend; since boyhood I have known and loved him. Yesterday we worked, because we had to work seven days a week to live. We were at a machine that gave no protection to those who used it. His clothing caught in a cog-wheel and I saw him torn and mangled. I, holding his poor body in my arms, cried aloud for vengeance and what happened? The guards took me and beat me. Look at my body!"

He tore his shirt. His back was raw and bloody.

"If you are men, follow me. We will take over the city and wreak vengeance on our oppressors. If you are dogs, then wait for your slaughter. We made this city, *we*, the workers! It is our city! Kill the wealthy idlers who fatten on our blood! Kill their paid soldiers who keep us in submission. Kill! Kill! 'til the streets run red with their blood. Follow their example and be merciless! Take their power, their wealth, their women! Be as heartless to them as they have been to us. Our slain brothers call on you for retribution."

Dr. Jeremy watched the officer he had followed. He knew there must be other officers in the crowd, watching, listening to the impassioned speech, but he wanted to keep close and observe this special officer. He saw, with a horror that almost broke his reserve and caution, the policeman draw his revolver and start shooting. Fellow officers did likewise. The crowd broke and ran for shelter, while the police, with their clubs swinging lustily, hitting whatever was within their reach, moved systematically to clear the Circle. It was not difficult. Several of the minions of the law met at the body of the dead orator, one emptying his revolver in-

to the body. Another stamped his heels on the face until it was a bleeding pulp.

Said Officer Turkus to Officer Martino: "Guess that will teach this squirt a lesson!" Said Officer Martino to Officer Turkus: "Sure it will! Next time they'll know better than to talk about capturing the city. We'll get promoted for this. This'll show the Boss that we're alert and efficient. If he don't ante up we'll throw him out and get a new Boss. You know as well as I do, Turkus, who runs the City. While we are at it we better bump off a few more."

Dr. Jeremy, in the security of a doorway, muttered: "Looks as though some of the white mice are reacting."

Just as he was opening the door of his room on the way to dinner that evening the 'phone rang. It was Miss Kelly asking if she might see him sometime later that evening. He asked her to join him in the lobby and have dinner with him. To this she agreed. As they ate she told him of her experience at *La Parisienne*, ending by saying: "The real tragedy is that I got no evening dress."

"That is of small moment, for it can be purchased any time. The important thing is what happened there. Write it in full—each detail—it will make marvelous material for our book. As a physician I advise you to relax tonight and go to bed early. It has been a strenuous day."

He was so restless himself that he could not concentrate on anything and so decided to call on the Professor.

"How are your observations progressing? Anything unusual?" he asked the savant.

"Not only unusual, but astounding! I have studied the reaction from every point. Just when I think I understand it, another phase thrusts itself upon my attention and I must begin my analysis anew. I have wondered if this could have happened anywhere except New York. When I made the proposition that you use the two-eyed woman as a symbol I felt I was treading on quicksand—playing with a prehistoric psyche. In some ways I am sorry I ever made the suggestion. Had I suspected the use to which you would have applied it, I feel positive I should never have mentioned it. Some phases of psychology are very dangerous to experiment with."

"I suppose you are keeping careful notes, Professor."

"I am. I write my daily observations and in my notebook I have my news clippings. Since the Ballet on Saturday night there have been a number of men killed in this city. Most of them were killed by their wives or sweethearts while they slept. Choked to death. These seem to

be a hysterical duplication of the death of the rooster. This is a very serious matter.

"Today I saw a few of those professional models on Fifth Avenue. I suppose that you had something to do with their sudden appearance. Saturday night on the stage the two-eyed woman looked monstrous but in the daylight the padded women with two left eyes were far more horrible. And they were certainly attracting attention from the other women. I believe that it will create a new style. In a week your so lovely women will resemble anthropomorphic apes. I ask myself: How long will it last? I ask you why you did this?"

He looked accusingly at the scientist.

"I am sure," replied Dr. Jeremy after a moment's study, "that you are convinced we Americans are most peculiar persons. No doubt we are—in some ways. There is a very great deal which might be said if I answered your question fully and truthfully. For the time being it must suffice that I am interested in social reactions. Continue, please with the observations and reports. Occasionally I will go over the details with you. Feel free to consult me at any time, however."

"The more I hear and think about the work for which you employed me, the more astonished I am. The most peculiar thing about it is your absolute confidence that some important event is about to transpire? How can you be so positive?" Professor Jungers was obviously puzzled.

"In America we have a habit that is called—'playing your hunch'," answered Dr. Jeremy, "We bet on horses; play the stock market; in fact we almost govern our daily lives by 'hunches'. There is no possible logical explanation for it; just a national nonconformity."

"Very interesting, but it still does not answer my question."

It was quite late when Dr. Jeremy left Professor Jungers but it seemed most important that he now talk with Mr. Hurd.

"I really believe it is beginning to work," he told the banker. "From a most interesting personal report from our lady reporter relative to her experience in a specialty shop today, it would seem that the models had all suddenly become catatonic. That is—all but one who captured a wealthy westerner and left the establishment still wearing her model's gown. The Madame-owner of the place went completely savage, beating the catatonic girls with a chair, until the place resembled a slaughter house."

"I also witnessed something entirely new in the annals of police behavior today in Columbus Circle."

Hurd listened gravely as the doctor recited the events of the morning.

"It seems to me," concluded Dr. Jeremy, "that these two facets of the life in Manhattan are more than isolated accidents of human behavior—or misbehavior if you wish. There have been times, we know, when the police have been unnecessarily severe, but today their brutality was different. It was not even the brutality of normal reaction; things like the Circle's mass murders are extraordinary. I was most affected by the manner in which the policeman casually broke the skulls of the catatonics, leaving them to die, perhaps, in the gutter. He did it as if he were in the habit of so doing to the people who did not instantly obey him."

"One question, Doctor," interrupted Hurd. "When you decided on the dosage of Chemical XYZ you had the matter of inherited memory in question. You wanted the average patient—is that the right word?—to drop just so many centuries into the subconscious. You felt if they were able to do so they, in their memory-state, might imitate the behavior of the ancestors of the period into which they had relapsed. Was that it?"

"Yes, that was part of the experiment."

"How far back did you determine one dose might take them?"

"About one thousand years. But I believe the average person took two doses, which would mean a regression of about two thousand years."

"Let us keep that figure in mind. Two thousand years. What were the ancestors of those policeman doing two thousand years ago? The police force is composed of all nationalities. Was there an army two thousand years ago somewhat on the order of The Foreign Legion?"

"I believe there was. There was a time in Roman history when the various units of the army were largely foreigners, loyal to their commanders, but loyal to Rome only because they were paid by Rome. Two thousand years ago—Rome—? The Imperial Legions? They made and deposed emperors; they were political king-makers. I wonder . . ." mused Jeremy.

BLAKE'S STORY IN THE SUNDAY *Tattler* caused more excitement in theatrical circles than anything that had occurred in a long time. All Monday morning editions carried hashed accounts of the Venus-burg Bacchanal. Each edition prominently featured a picture of the Woman clearly showing the left face with the two eyes, as in the Picasso picture.

Tickets for the repeat performance for Monday night sold at fabulous

prices. There were demands that Tannhauser ballet be given for a week with daily matinees.

Promptly at ten o'clock Monday morning twenty models, wearing the draped, two-eyed hat and padded dress appeared simultaneously at various points along Fifth, Madison and Park Avenues from Fifty-ninth street to Thirty-fourth street. Women mobbed them, shrieking, fighting, shoving one another to get better views of the ensemble.

By mid-week better stores had models wearing the pneumatic padded dress and grotesque hat, waddling instead of mincing, so that ladies might learn the appropriate walk.

As if by magic the new toilette accessories were available from the Specialty Shoppe to the most inexpensive dress house. Manufacturers of novelties rushed into production of the separate eyes, some elaborately contrived so they could be made to blink; others had long lashed-lids and yet others were merely face patches.

Many who could not afford even these inexpensive facial decorations made their own, crudely sketched or cut from optical advertisements and those who could not purchase the pneumatic pads supplemented them with cloth pads in the required anatomical spots. In a few days the natural curves of Manhattan femininity were replaced by redundant globes.

A new dance was created, becoming an instant rage. In every night club, dance hall, dive, distorted women were killing blustering little cockerels to the wild applause of the female audience. The males were all silently resentful.

Wednesday, Miss G. G. Kelly spent quite some time idling around Times Square, looking into shop windows; talking to people when she could make an approach or standing at bus stops, listening to what others were saying. Finding nothing of much interest she stepped into the lobby of the Astor, seating herself by the bell captain's desk, she overheard a remark that many of the negro help had not reported for work. Thereupon she determined to visit Harlem. Outside the kiosk at 125th Street and Lenox Avenue she found what she had been hunting all morning—news.

A truck, with loud speaker, was moving down the Avenue; on the truck was a gigantic negress dressed in the helmet hat and two eyes, as decreed by fashion. She did not need pads, nature had amply supplied her; she overflowed the chair below and above, in front, she positively ballooned. Since the truck sides had been removed she was visible to her frantic audience, most of whom wore the special hat and extra eye. As the enormous woman waved her long, powerful arms, the women in the

street, ranging in color from olive-white to pure African black, chanted in almost hysterical cadence.

*"The Eyes! The Eyes! The Eyes!
The Eyes of the Goddess so Wise!
Look at The Eyes! The wonderful Eyes!
She will direct us. The Eyes! The Eyes!
She will protect us. The Eyes! The Eyes!
Lily the Wise! With The Eyes! The Eyes!
Lily the Sweet! Oh look at her Eyes!
We kneel at your feet.
You with the wonderful Eyes."*

Again and again they intoned that chant, clapping their hands, supplying the beat of the song. Those near the truck followed the words, while those in the distance were shouting, repeating only the phrase:

"The Eyes! The Eyes! The Eyes!"

Because of the mob-mania and the fact that Miss Kelly also wore the two-eyed hat and bulbous dress no one seemed to notice that she was a white woman. Joining the chant, partly to further conceal the fact that she was an outsider as well as to memorize the words, she fought her way through the crowd until she was in plain view of the leader of the refrain. Jostled on all sides it was hopeless to attempt notes but she knew she could remember the jungle chant.

Now the black woman slowly raised her broad hands high in the air. Her left face showed two large eyes. She was smiling proudly. Suddenly the crowd became quiet. She shouted: "Who is the new God?"

"Lily of The Two Eyes, is our God," the women screamed in unison.

"Who is goin' feed you?"

"Lily of The Two Eyes!"

"Who is goin' give you money?"

"Lily of The Two Eyes!"

"Who is goin' make you live easy, like white folks?"

"Lily of The Two Eyes!"

"Who you goin' pray to?"

"Lily! Lily! Lily! Lily with the Two Eyes!"

"Fetch me a great big chair, a great big chair for Lily the new woman God, to sit on," she demanded loudly.

The crowd repeated the order: "Git a chair for Lily. A great big chair for Lily. Somethin' big enough for Lily to sit on. Got to be a gr-aaa-tt bi-ig chair 'cause she's got a big sitter-downer."

She looked at the first chair passed up to her and broke it into bits

with her brawny hands. The second chair was also splintered but the third one pleased her. As she seated herself in the new chair the smile left her lips and she became bellicose roaring:

"*I is Lily the new God, the Woman God! I is wise 'cause I'se got two eyes! Fetch me a man, one of them no-'count Harlem men who thinks he can boss us women. Bring me a man sô I can show him the way us women goin' love Harlem men from now on.*"

The closeby women shrilled in laughter as the order was passed through the crowd: "Lily wants a man to love. She wants to show us how to love. Lily with the two eyes wants to love a man!"

Someone in the fringe of the feminine mob found a little man, a pool-room pimp. They passed him over the heads of the closely packed women. When they picked him up he was swearing but as he neared the truck he started to pray. Two women climbed onto the truck, took him from the crowd and passed him to Lily.

With one hand around a knee and the other around a shoulder she held him, kicking, high above her head, so all might see. Then she lowered him to her wide lap.

"Lily's loving a man!" she shouted.

"Lily's loving a man!" the women echoed, clapping their hands and chanting.

Slowly she strangled him, threw his dead body to the floor of the truck and stepped on it.

"This is a new day in Harlem," she yelled. "Us women are the bosses in Harlem today and everyday. I showed you what men are for. I'se Lily of the two eyes. I'se the new woman God! Now go and tell the news—tell the gals the glad tidings. We won't work no more 'cause the men is gwine work for us. They is gwine to feed us and buy us dresses and perfume and if they don't we'll start loving them. Come out tonight and worship me. Bring drums and a band. Tell the men to bring lots of eats and drinks. For I'se the new Woman God. Men better be good to me and to you all, my children, for I sure showed you how to love a man."

The crowd slowly broke up. G. G. Kelly, sweating, soiled, nauseated, almost ran for the entrance to the subway. At last she reached her room. She telephoned for a tenderloin steak and everything that went with it, took a shower, donned a dainty hostess gown. By that time her dinner was ready. She ate, still under the influence of her Harlem visit. As she ate the steak her jaws kept time to the chant, *The eyes! The eyes! The Eyes!*

Lighting her after-dinner cigarette she went to her portable typewriter and wrote almost automatically just as she would have written years before for her beloved newspaper.

A NEW RELIGION IN HARLEM

LILY IS THE NEW GOD

Overnight the uninhibited women of Harlem have frantically adopted a new religion, the head of which is a woman, black as night, giant in size, with a voice like thunder. She calls herself, "Lily, the new God."

Lily, the woman God, may not be beautiful but she is no fool. Her religion appeals to the women of Harlem for it gives them food, clothing, luxury and release from drudgery. From now on the men of Harlem will have to fight for masculine supremacy or live as slaves.

I have just witnessed the first meeting of this new religion, primitive, deadly, breathing the hot air of the tropical jungles. I have seen Lily hypnotize her all too eager feminine worshippers until they were as a mass of hysterical robots. They were pitiful and obscene.

I saw her kill a man, strangling him to death with her powerful hands in plain view of a thousand applauding women. She advised them to treat all their men that way, "Love them to death," unless the men provided them with every luxury. Her telepathy is powerful. Caught in its mesh there are some, I am sure, who would not willingly do her bidding, for they love their men. But under her control they are helpless. Those thousand women watching her, chanting her praises, believing in her, worshipping her, tonight will be ten thousand. Those who look for race riots in Harlem need not worry. If riots occur they will be sex riots. Unless the men of Harlem are farsighted enough to stop this at once, Harlem will be ruled by women—merciless, power-mad, Lily-drunk women.

Unless I am badly mistaken there is going to be real news from Harlem in a few days.

And now for more detailed impressions . . .

The afternoon and evening papers gave front pagespace to the Columbus Circle Riot and the new feminine religion in Harlem. The radio commentators interspersed the peculiar events with flashes from Europe and the latest political gossip. Several evening papers carried hastily written editorials which endeavored to place proper value on and correct inter-

pretation of both riot and religion as very ancient forms of mass expression.

10

BY THE EVENING OF THE THIRD DAY the hungry mis-erables of the Metropolis began to ferment. For years a minimum amount of relief had kept them in a form of hibernating poverty. Like animals they grew, mated, reproduced and reached premature senility. They were rarely happy or comfortable. Lacking initiative, they seldom sought employment, and the few who desired a living wage could find but little work. They drifted, helpless derelicts in a Sargasso Sea of despair.

No large number of them had taken the chance for easily acquired wealth by entering the chewing gum contest. All, however, were willing to follow any leadership which promised them food, clothing and a more comfortable existence.

"Izzy the Dope" ruled a goodly portion of the Lower East Side. Centuries before, one of his ancestors had been King of the Thieves' Market in Paris. He was one of the few in his district who had secured a package of the gum. With unusual generosity he gave one stick of it to his Moll. The part he consumed was sufficient to drop him back to the Fourteenth Century and the predatory habits of the King of the Beggars. He decide to rule *all* the East Side.

His leadership was not as emotional as that of the Two Eyed Lily; he had none of the courage of the Columbus Circle orator. Instead he used the cunning of the snake in becoming a ravaging hyena. He stirred the spoiled flour of the slums until it fermented and rose, like yeast in dough.

The argument he used was a very old one. From the time the more intelligent of the herd began to accumulate food, furs and women in caves protected by stones across the entrance, the destitute, outside the caves, envied him. The old propaganda had come down from the earliest days.

We have little that other men have. If we become strong enough we can take their wealth from them.

Izzy the Dope had merely to suggest the idea to his gang. They spread it throughout the district, thence by grapevine, from Brooklyn Bridge to midtown. Shortly a hundred small riots started around a hundred little stores owned by little merchants. It was so easy that some wondered why they had not thought of it before.

These early riots were short lived, over before the inadequate and indifferent police force could act. The incidents were given scant press notice. One of Hurd's roving reporters, however, wrote at length concerning the rise of the rabble and its implications.

But various wealthy gentlemen, owners of large department stores, had a vision of what these riots might become if they spread under intelligent and resourceful leadership. This ability to foresee trouble was not a newly acquired mental process. For centuries the rich had possessed this fear and had built walls around their castles. The merchants nightly placed metal coverings in front of their shop windows. The fear of the poor made desperate was always with them.

A number of these gentlemen, representing millions of dollars in commercial undertakings called on the Mayor of New York and mildly suggested that something should be done to assure them police protection in the event of a spread of the rioting to Broadway and Fifth Avenue.

Mayor Van Dorn met these merchants, listening courteously to their request.

"I assure you, Gentlemen," replied His Honor with a smile, "that your fears are groundless. I understand there has been some trouble in the poorer sections, a few small stores broken into and their stock taken, but my Police Commissioner has the matter well in hand. However, to assure you, I will talk with the Commissioner. Please wait here for me."

Van Dorn went a few doors down the hall, entering via a knock which he used only here. "Well, Bill, how is everything?"

"Fine, as far as I know."

"How about those midtown riots?"

"Under control. Of course my men had to be a little rough but we crashed down on them with a maximum of force and a minimum of publicity. You know the boys are rather clever at that."

"Do you think that was the end of it?"

"Perhaps yes, and perhaps no. Those people are hungry."

"Any danger of the trouble spreading to the big stores?"

"Perhaps— if the right man eggs them on."

"If he does can you stop it?"

"I certainly can. Use the Fire Department. The Police can easily substitute guns for clubs. We can stop anything we want to."

"Here is the explanation for my visit," said the Mayor. "Waiting in my office is a committee from the Fifth Avenue Merchants Association. They are afraid there will be real trouble. They are asking for extra protection. How about it?"

"We can give it to them. Tell them that. But say they will have to pay for it—about five percent on their store valuation. Part of it can be spent for food and amusements but most of it goes to me and my force. Of course they will not know about the rake-off. You call it charity. You get the idea? For a day give everyone admission to the movies, free beer in every tap room; send trucks through the tenement area loaded with hot dogs and cheap candy. If they are given food, beer and amusements, they may stop rioting. And, if my force gets that cut, every one of them, they will feel a little better about using real force if it becomes necessary."

The Mayor was horrified. He knew what graft was, but he also knew it should be used cautiously. "That," he exclaimed, "is about as wild a plan to protect the wealth of this city as I have ever heard of! It is especially scandalous when you calmly say that most of such an assessment should go to the Police. I never heard of such an outrageous proposal. You must be very sick, have a fever, be delirious to suggest it. You better see a Doctor, Bill. Take a month's vacation. Be examined by a specialist in mental disease."

The Commissioner laughed. "Never felt better in my life. Does sound raw, maybe, but these are raw times. It is not only a question of these rich men. They will be glad to come across when they find they need our protection. But do you realize who is keeping you in office, Mr. Mayor? It is the police and the fire-department. You are mayor as long as we want you—and no longer. Perhaps we did not make you mayor but we can break you tomorrow if we want. All we need to do is just sit tight for twenty-four hours and then both rabble and the rich will demand your resignation at once. The new mayor will do as we say or we'll break him, too. Might as well make up your mind that from now on I rule the city government. And as long as I take care of my men they will take care of me. Take it or leave it, Henry Van Dorn; it doesn't make any difference to me."

"But what will the rest of the nation think when they hear about it?"

"What difference does that make? And how are they going to hear about it? Certainly not from you—or me. If those men waiting for you in your office are saps enough to pay through their noses do you think they will brag about it? This would be a big thing for you. Think of the headlines:

"MAYOR FEEDS THE HUNGRY. FREE BEER AND FREE MOVIES FOR THE POOR.

"A NEW EXPERIMENT IN PHILANTHROPY.

"A MAN WITH SUCH COURAGE WOULD BE A GOOD PRESIDENT."

"No! It would be political suicide, Bill."

"All right. But don't say I didn't warn you. I have to have money to keep my men in line; the poor have to be fed and amused to keep them quiet. Easier just now to feed them bread than bullets. It is all expensive. If these men want protection they must pay for it."

"Well, I will tell them," said the Mayor dejectedly.

"I will go with you. I want to be sure you use the right words. And from now on you are going to have protection twenty-four hours a day; protection because you are weak, and surveillance because I don't trust you."

The two men walked slowly to the Mayor's office. To the waiting committee he said, "Gentlemen, with the help of my Commissioner I have made a complete survey of this entire situation. There is no doubt that in parts of this city hunger and destitution have roused desperation in the hearts of many of our unfortunate citizens. Something must be done at once to take their minds off their trouble. They must be fed and they must be entertained. We believe that in a few days this crisis will pass. In the meantime we should work rapidly cutting every piece of red tape we can. Expenses will be heavy. Several thousand additional officers are needed immediately to reinforce the police force. Food will have to be purchased in wholesale lots. I want to open every movie in the city for one day's free entertainment. I would like to give them free beer. It will take money and there is nothing in the city treasury available for the purpose.

"I am forced to ask you to contribute to what will be the greatest charity ever undertaken by any city in the world. Will you go down the line and collect five percent of assessed valuation from every store in the city? Bring it in cash to—well, better bring it to the office of the Police Commissioner. He will see that it is spent at once for a city holiday. If you do this the Commissioner promises that there will be no more rioting, certainly not on The Avenue."

A chorus of indignant "*Noes*" was the reply,

The mayor was trembling with fear.

The Honorable William McCarty, however, stood smiling till the uproar ceased.

"Gentlemen, you can take it or leave it. This is a very large city. My men can do just so much and no more. You give me money, and I'll give you protection. And remember this! If you give me the money

and talk about it you won't have the protection. I know you think this proposal is off-color; inside you are muttering that you are taxpayers; you don't like this assessment because it is something new. *Take it or leave it!* Better lose a twentieth of your wealth than all of it. All the police have to do is sit still for twenty-four hours and the poor will wreck your stores like a tornado."

"Just wait until the next election!" yelled the president of the Association. "We will break your machine to bits."

"Don't talk so loud," advised McCarty. "There may not be any elections in New York. *Now get out!* You have four hours before the banks close. Get the money to me before eight tonight. The stores that kick in get protection; those that don't *get hell!*"

"We will form our own private police guard!" cried a man.

"And what will you arm them with?" asked McCarty. "We can visit every store and search it for weapons. You know what the Sullivan Law is?"

"We can close the stores!" threatened another man.

"Sure you can. But you can only close the door. How about windows? Ever hear plate glass windows breaking? Be sensible, Gentlemen! Play along with the mayor! Safety first, and all that sort of thing, you know. Five percent won't hurt you. It won't make *you* go hungry."

"I will give you a check for my contribution to this relief fund right now," said the owner of a very large store.

"*Noth-ingg doo-ing!* Cash or nothing!"

The chairman of the committee shrugged. All but two of the group followed him from the office. These men held a whispered conversation, then turned to the Commissioner.

"We will send our money to your office in a few hours," they said. They kept their promise. Their contribution to charity was over seventy-five thousand dollars. But that night one man went to Albany, the other to Washington.

The next day a Bowery mob wrecked the Bon Ton Department Store while the police looked on listlessly, claiming inability to disperse the crowd because of the many women and children. That night nearly a million dollars was handed to the Commissioner. The following day preparations were begun to divert one-third of this sum to the feeding of the poor, assuaging the thirst of the alcoholics and providing entertainment for as many of the destitute as could be crowded into the cheaper movie houses. The other two-thirds was divided among the police in sums

ranging from ten dollars up to the two hundred thousand coolly pocketed by Commissioner McCarty as his just share of the loot.

That night another mob, led in person by "Izzy the Dope," surged uptown, intent on further vandalism. They had every reason to be encouraged by their previous success at the Bon Ton. But this time they were met by a solid line of policemen who used methods most efficient and rapid. Gunfire continued until the last of the shrieking crowd had disappeared down the side streets. Casualty lists contained no account of any wounded. Over a thousand men, women and teenagers died in that affair. With casual thoroughness the police walked over the battlefield (if such a name could be given to a massacre) deliberately shooting every wounded person they found. Much later that night came the garbage trucks, into which were tossed the bodies which were then dumped into the East River.

"Izzy the Dope" floated a few hours on the tide sinking slowly as it ebbed to the sea. In a hard way he had learned that the upper stratum of society is always able to protect itself from the lower strata.

After that experience the hungry, like hunted rats, remained in their rat holes.

A Lieutenant of Police had remained neutral. He was an old man and had always been an honorable citizen. Head of an outlying district he had taken his share of the assessment, marked each crisp ten dollar bill with a large red G—for graft—and disappeared. Five hours later he was in very earnest conversation with the Governor of the State of New York. The Governor shortly thereafter sent a telegram to Mayor Henry Van Dorn, and called the President of the United States over long distance. At the close of this conversation, the President said to the Governor: "If you don't do something, I will."

The mayor, in a state of collapse by this time, showed the telegram to the Commissioner, asking: "What shall I do, Bill?"

"Tell them to go to hell!" replied that worthy.

END OF PART ONE

New York has slid into the Abyss, but the horror has barely started. You cannot afford to miss the concluding chapters of this novel in our November issue.

The Death Mask

by Mrs. H. D. Everett

We have very slightly abridged this 19th century tale of a woman whose dying request was not at all what her husband had expected it would be, but . . .

"YES, THAT IS A PORTRAIT of my wife. It is considered to be a good likeness. But of course she was older-looking towards the last."

Enderby and I were on our way to the smoking-room after dinner, and the picture hung on the staircase. We had been chums at school a quarter of a century ago, and later on at college; but I had spent the last decade out of England. I returned to find my friend a widower of four years' standing. And a good job too, I thought to myself when I heard of it, for I had no liking for the late Gloriana. The picture was certainly like her. She was a fine woman, with aquiline features and a cold eye. The artist had done the features justice—and the eye, which seemed to keep a steely watch on all the comings and goings of the house out of which she had died.

We made only a brief pause before the portrait, and then went on. The smoking-room was an apartment built out at the back of the house by a former owner, and shut off by double doors to serve as a nursery. Mrs. Enderby had no family, and she disliked the smell of tobacco. So the big room was made over to Tom's pipes and cigars; and if Tom's friends wanted to smoke, they must smoke there or not at all. I remembered the room and the rule, but I was not prepared to find it still existing.

We were soon installed in a couple of deep-cushioned chairs before

a good fire. I thought Enderby breathed more freely when he closed the double doors behind us, shutting off the dull formal house, and the staircase and the picture. But he was not looking well; there hung about him an unmistakable air of depression.

"You must run down and see us," I said presently. "I want to introduce you to my wife. Can you come next week?"

His face lit up with real pleasure. "I should like it of all things," he said heartily. But a qualification came after. The cloud settled back over him and he sighed. "That is, if I can get away."

"Why, what is to hinder you?"

"It may not seem much to stay for, but I—I have got in the way of stopping here—to keep things together." He did not look at me, but leaned over to the fender to knock the ash off his cigar.

"Tell you what, Tom, you are getting hipped living by yourself. Why don't you sell the house, or let it off just as it is, and try a complete change?"

"I can't sell it. I'm only the tenant for life. It was my wife's."

"Well, I suppose there is nothing to prevent you letting it? Or if you can't let it, you might shut it up."

"There is nothing *legal* to prevent me—!"

"Then, my dear fellow, why not? Knock about a bit, and see the world. But, to my thinking, the best thing you could do would be to marry again."

He shook his head drearily.

"Of course it is a delicate matter to urge upon a widower. But you have paid the utmost ceremonial respect. Four years, you know. The greatest stickler for propriety would deem it ample."

"It isn't that. Dick—I've a great mind to tell you rather a queer story." He threw the stump of his cigar into the fire, and turned to me. And then I saw how pale he was, and that a dew of perspiration was breaking out on his white face.

"My wife was some time ailing before she died, and the doctors were in consultation. But I did not know how serious her complaint was till the last. Then they told me there was no hope, as coma had set in. But it was possible, even probable, that there would be a revival of consciousness before death, and for this I was to hold myself ready.

"I daresay you will write me down a coward, but I dreaded the revival: I was ready to pray that she might pass away in her sleep. I knew she held exalted views about the marriage tie, and I felt sure if there were any last words she would exact a pledge. I could not at such

a moment refuse to promise, and I did not want to be tied. You will recollect that she was my senior. I was about to be left a widower in middle life, and in the natural course of things I had a good many years before me. You see?"

"My dear fellow, I don't think a promise so extorted ought to bind you. It isn't fair—!"

"Wait, and hear me. I was sitting here, miserable enough, as you may suppose, when the doctor came to fetch me to her room. Mrs. Enderby was conscious and had asked for me, but he particularly begged me not to agitate her in any way, lest pain should return. She was lying stretched out in the bed, looking already like a corpse.

"'Tom,' she said, 'they tell me I am dying, and there is something I want you to promise.'

"I groaned in spirit. It was all up with me, I thought. But she went on.

"'When I am dead and in my coffin, I want you to cover my face with your own hands. Promise me this.'

"It was not in the very least what I expected. Of course I promised.

"'I want you to cover my face with a particular handkerchief on which I set a value. When the time comes, open the cabinet to the right of the window, and you will find it in the third drawer from the top. You cannot mistake it, for it is the only thing in the drawer.'

"That was every word she said, if you believe me, Dick. She just sighed and shut her eyes as if she was going to sleep, and she never spoke again. Three or four days later they came again to ask me if I wished to take a last look, as the undertaker's men were about to close the coffin.

"I felt a great reluctance, but it was necessary I should go. She looked as if made of wax, and was colder than ice to touch. I opened the cabinet, and there, just as she said, was a large handkerchief of very fine cambric, lying by itself. It was embroidered with a monogram device in all four corners, and was not of a sort I had ever seen her use. I spread it out and laid it over the dead face; and then what happened was rather curious. It seemed to draw down over the features and cling to them, to nose and mouth and forehead and the shut eyes, till it became a perfect mask. My nerves were shaken, I suppose; I was seized with horror, and flung back the covering sheet, hastily quitting the room. And the coffin was closed that night.

"Well, she was buried, and I put up a monument which the neighborhood considered handsome. As you see, I was bound by no pledge

to abstain from marriage; and, although I knew what would have been her wish, I saw no reason why I should regard it. And some months after, a family of the name of Ashcroft came to live at The Leasowes, and they had a pretty daughter.

"I took a fancy to Lucy Ashcroft the first time I saw her, and it was soon apparent that she was well inclined to me. She was a gentle, yielding little thing; not the superior style of woman. Not at all like—"

(I made no comment, but I could well understand that in his new matrimonial venture Tom would prefer a contrast.)

"—But I thought I had a very good chance of happiness with her; and I grew fond of her: very fond indeed. Her people were of the hospitable sort, and they encouraged me to go to The Leasowes, dropping in when I felt inclined: it did not seem as if they would be likely to put obstacles in the way. Matters progressed, and I made up my mind one evening to walk over there and declare myself. I had been up to town the day before, and came back with a ring in my pocket: rather a fanciful design of double hearts, but I thought Lucy would think it pretty, and would let me put it on her finger. I went up to change into dinner things, making myself as spruce as possible, and coming to the conclusion before the glass that I was not such a bad figure of a man after all, and that there was not much gray in my hair. Ay, Dick, you may smile: it is a good bit grayer now.

"I had taken out a clean handkerchief, and thrown the one carried through the day away crumpled on the floor. I don't know what made me turn to look at it as it lay there, but, once it caught my eye, I stood staring at it as if spellbound. The handkerchief was moving—Dick, I swear it—rapidly altering in shape, puffing up here and there as if blown by wind, spreading and moulding itself into the features of a face. And what face should it be but that death-mask of Gloriana, which I had covered in the coffin eleven months before!

"To say I was horror-stricken conveys little of the feeling that possessed me. I snatched up the rag of cambric and flung it on the fire, and it was nothing but a rag in my hand, and in another moment no more than blackened timber on the bar of the grate. There was no face below."

"Of course not," I said. "It was a mere hallucination. You were cheated by an excited fancy."

"You may be sure I told myself all that, and more: and I went downstairs and tried to pull myself together with a dram. But I was curiously upset, and, for that night at least, I found it impossible to play

the wooer. The recollection of the death-mask was too vivid; it would have come between me and Lucy's lips.

"The effect wore off, however. In a day or two I was bold again, and as much disposed to smile at my folly as you are at this moment. I proposed, and Lucy accepted me; and I put on the ring. Ashcroft *pere* was graciously pleased to approve of the settlements I offered, and Ashcroft *mere* promised to regard me as a son. And during the first forty-eight hours of our engagement, there was not a cloud to mar the blue.

"I proposed on a Monday, and on Wednesday I went again to dine and spend the evening with just their family party. Lucy and I found our way afterwards into the back drawing-room, which seemed to be made over to us by tacit understanding. Any way, we had it to ourselves: and as Lucy sat on the settee, busy with her work, I was privileged to sit beside her, close enough to watch the careful stitches she was setting, under which the pattern grew.

"She was embroidering a square of fine linen to serve as a tea-cloth, and it was intended as a present for a friend; she was anxious, she told me, to finish it in the next few days, ready for despatch. But I was somewhat impatient of her engrossment in the work; I wanted her to look at me while we talked, and to be permitted to hold her hand. I was making plans for a tour we would take together after Easter: arguing that eight weeks spent in preparation was enough for any reasonable bride. Lucy was easily entreated; she laid aside the linen square on the table at her elbow. I held her fingers captive, but her eyes wandered from my face, as she was still deliciously shy.

"All at once she exclaimed. Her work was moving, there was growing to be a face in it: did I see?

"I saw, indeed. It was the Gloriana death-mask, forming there as it had formed in my handkerchief at home: the marked nose and chin, the severe mouth, the mould of forehead, almost complete. I snatched it up and dropped it over the back of the couch. 'It did look like a face,' I allowed. 'But never mind it, darling; I want you to attend to me.' Something of the sort I said, I hardly knew what, for my blood was running cold. Lucy pouted; she wanted to dwell on the marvel, and my impatient action had displeased her. I went on talking wildly, being afraid of the pauses, but the psychological moment had gone by. I felt I did not carry her with me as before: she hesitated over my persuasions; the forecast of a Sicilian honeymoon had ceased to charm. By-and-by she suggested that Mrs. Ashcroft would expect us to rejoin the circle

in the other room. And perhaps I would pick up her work for her—still with a slight air of offence.

"I walked round the settee to recover the luckless piece of linen; but she turned also, looking over the back, so at the same instant we both saw.

"There again was the Face, rigid and severe: and now the corners of the cloth were tucked under, completing the form of the head. And that was not all. Some white drapery had been improvised and extended beyond it on the floor, presenting the complete figure laid out straight and stiff, ready for the grave. Lucy's alarm was excusable. She shrieked aloud, shriek upon shriek, and immediately an indignant family of Ashcrofts rushed in through the half-drawn portieres which divided the two rooms, demanding the cause of her distress.

"Meanwhile I had fallen upon the puffed-out form, and destroyed it. Lucy's embroidery composed the head: the figure was ingeniously contrived out of a large Turkish bath-sheet, brought in from one of the bedrooms, no one knew how or when. I held up the things protesting their innocence, while the family were stabbing me through and through with looks of indignation, and Lucy was sobbing in her mother's arms. She might have been foolish, she allowed; it did seem ridiculous now that she saw what it was. But at the moment it was too dreadful: it looked so like—so like! And here a fresh sob choked her into silence.

"Peace was restored at last, but plainly the Ashcrofts doubted me. The genial father stiffened, and Mrs. Ashcroft administered indirect reproofs. She hated practical joking, so she informed me; she might be wrong, and no doubt she was old-fashioned, but she had been brought up to consider it in the highest degree ill-bred. And perhaps I had not considered how sensitive Lucy was and easily alarmed. She hoped I would take warning for the future, and that nothing of this kind would occur again.

"Practical joking—oh, ye gods! As if it was likely that I, alone with the girl of my heart, would waste the precious hour in building up effigies of sham corpses on the floor! And Lucy ought to have known that the accusation was absurd, as I had never for a moment left her side. She did take my part when more composed; but the mystery remained, beyond explanation of hers or mine.

"As for the future, I could not think of that without a failing heart. If the Powers arrayed against us were in truth what my superstition feared, I might as well give up hope at once, for I knew there would be no relenting. I could see the whole absurdity of the thing as well as

you do now; but, if you put yourself in my place, Dick, you will be forced to confess that it was tragic too.

"I did not see Lucy the next day, as I was bound to go again to town: but we had planned to meet and ride together on the Friday morning. I was to be at The Leasowes at a certain hour, and you may be sure I was punctual. Her horse had already been brought round, and the groom was leading it up and down. I had hardly dismounted when she came down the steps of the porch; and I noticed at once a new look on her face, a harder set about that red mouth of hers which was so soft and kissable. But she let me put her up on the saddle and settle her foot in the stirrup, and she was the bearer of a gracious message from her mother. I was expected to return to lunch, and Mrs. Ashcroft begged us to be punctual, as a friend who had stayed the night with them, would be leaving immediately after.

"'You will be pleased to meet her, I think,' said Lucy, leaning forward to pat her horse. 'I find she knows you very well. It is Miss Kingsworthy.'

"Now Miss Kingsworthy was a school friend of Gloriana's, who used now and then to visit us here. I was not aware that she and the Ashcrofts were acquainted; but, as I have said, they had only recently come into the neighborhood as tenants of The Leasowes. I had no opportunity to express pleasure or the reverse, for Lucy was riding on, and putting her horse to a brisk pace. It was some time before she drew rein, and again admitted conversation. We were descending a steep hill, and the groom was following at a discreet distance behind, far enough to be out of earshot.

"Lucy looked very pretty on horseback but this is by the way. The mannish hat suited her, and so did the habit fitting closely to her shape.

"'Tom,' she said and again I noticed that new hardness in her face. "'Tom,' Miss Kingsworthy tells me your wife did not wish you to marry again, and she made you promise her that you would not. Miss Kingsworthy was quite astonished to hear that you and I are engaged. Is this true?"

"I was able to tell her it was not: that my wife had never asked, and I had never given her, any such pledge. I allowed she disliked second marriages—in certain cases, and perhaps she had made some remark to that effect to Miss Kingsworthy; it was not unlikely. And then I appealed to her. Surely she would not let a mischief-maker's tittle-tattle come between her and me?"

"I thought her profile looked less obdurate, but she would not let her eyes meet mine as she answered:

"Of course not, if that was all. And I doubt if I would have heeded it, only that it seemed to fit in with—something else. Tom, it was very horrible, what we saw on Wednesday evening. And—and don't be angry, but I asked Miss Kingsworthy what your wife was like. I did not tell her why I wanted to know.'

"What has that got to do with it?" I demanded—stoutly enough; but, alas! I was too well aware.

"She told me that Mrs. Enderby was handsome, but she had very marked features, and was severe-looking when she did not smile. A high forehead, a Roman nose, and a decided chin. Tom, that face in the cloth was just like that. Did you not see?"

"Of course I protested.

"My darling, what nonsense! I saw it looked a little like a face, but I pulled it to pieces at once because you were frightened.'

"No," she said, 'I have thought it over, and if it happens only once I have made up my mind to believe it a mistake and to forget. But if it comes again—if it goes on coming—' Here she shuddered and turned white. 'Oh, Tom, I could not—I could not!'

"That was the ultimatum. She liked me as much as ever; she even owned to a warmer feeling; but she was not going to marry a haunted man.

"I am close to the end now, so I shall need to tax your patience very little longer. A single chance remained. Gloriana's power, whatever its nature and however derived, might have been so spent in the previous effort that she could effect no more. I clung to this shred of hope, and did my best to play the part of the light-hearted lover, the sort of companion Lucy expected, who would shape himself to her mood; but I was conscious that I played it ill.

"The ride was a lengthy business. Lucy's horse cast a shoe, and it was impossible to change the saddle on to the groom's hack or my own mare, as neither of them had been trained to the habit. We were bound to return at a foot-pace, and did not reach The Leasowes until two o'clock. Lunch was over: Mrs. Ashcroft had set out for the station driving Miss Kingsworthy; but some cutlets were keeping hot for us, so we were informed, and could be served immediately.

"We went at once into the dining-room, as Lucy was hungry; and she took off her hat and laid it on a side-table: she said the close fit of it made her head ache. The cutlets had been misrepresented: they were

lukewarm; but Lucy made a good meal off them and the fruit-tart which followed, very much at her leisure. Heaven knows I would not have grudged her so much as a mouthful; but that luncheon was an ordeal I cannot readily forget.

"The servant absented himself, having seen us served; and then my troubles began. The tablecloth seemed alive at the corner which was between us; it rose in waves as if pulled up by wind, though the window was fast shut against any wandering airs. I tried to seem unconscious; tried to talk as if no horror of apprehension was filling all my mind, while I was flattening out the bewitched damask with a grasp, I hardly dared relax. Lucy rose at last, saying she must change her dress. Occupied with the cloth, it had not occurred to me to look round, or keep watch on what might be going on in another part of the room. The hat on the side-table had been tilted over sideways, and in that position it was made to crown another presentation of the Face. What it was made of this time I cannot say; probably a serviette, as several lay about. The line material, of whatever sort, was again moulded into the perfect form; but this time the mouth showed humor, and appeared to relax in a grim smile.

"Lucy shrieked, and dropped into my arms in a swoon; a real genuine fainting-fit, out of which she was brought round with difficulty, after summoned help of doctors.

"I hung about miserably till her safety was assured, and then went as miserably home. Next morning I received a cutting little note from my mother-in-law elect, in which she returned the ring, and informed me the engagement must be considered at an end.

"Well, Dick, you know now why I do not marry. And what have you to say?"



One By One

by Richard M. Hodgens

The Dualistic Religions are those which present two equal and opposite Creators and Almighty Gods, constantly in conflict, with human beings part of the stakes. Many Christians mistakenly think of The Devil as a being equal and opposite to their God. This is simply not Judaic or Christian theology, wherein The Devil (or a devil) is the angelic equivalent of a bad man. It is in the Persian theology that we find The Devil (or Ahriman) as equal to the Good Creator, and our new author bases his story upon these premises.

IN THE END, ALL DEFENSE was in vain: the God of all Evil took another soul, leaving another untenanted body behind. That left one living soul alone. He crouched on his pillar and mourned and prayed.

The one Theophilus who remained alone—and his brother Theophili who had been lost—had wondered, at times, whether certain Theophili had been taken, or still retained their souls, since all the brothers affected silent immobility on their columns, and not all the dead collapsed and tumbled from them. But this morning there was no doubt. The latest Theophilus to go had not moved or spoken for days. He had not raved before he lost his soul to the Evil One, as a few others had. He had gone silently, except for a final sigh or gulp that seemed to shake the foundations of the ancient temple, or even the foundations of the encircling desert and the starry dome above—and so the sigh or gulp might not have been his, but rather one God's or the Other's. But he had gnashed his teeth and rolled his eyes for an hour or more before that sound, and afterward he had not done so. The surviving Theophilus had seen this quite clearly, as he prayed fervently for Good, against Evil, on his afflicted brother's behalf—even though the Good God's sun had

not yet begun to rise. Evil's victim had seemed diabolically illuminated all through Evil's night—as in a theater Theophilus once had visited in his frivolous youth in the wicked city, where all was dark except the speaker of the tragedy. Then all was dark indeed. The soul-less body stood, rigid, until near dawn, and then it toppled and fell, along with the round, worn capital beneath its feet. Both stone and body broke on the tessellated floor below.

And so the last Theophilus mourned and prayed for the next-to-last, who was worse than dead, even before the holy sun arose, and long before the faithful followed it from the city to honor the latest dead, if any, and to bring food and water to the living, if any—as they had done for days and days while the holy men succumbed to Evil one by one.

As he watched the faithful coming through the desert toward the ruined temple, following their shortening shadows, appearing and disappearing as they crossed the dunes that turned from tiger-pelt to blinding white gold as the morning passed, he only continued his prayer for the lost souls of the others, although he knew it could not help, and he tried not to pray too clamorously—for then he thought not of the Theophili who had been, but of himself: "Only I remain. I am next. Perhaps tonight . . . Good God, not tonight!"

The twin Gods of Good and Evil were equally mighty, he knew. Eleven out of twelve men dedicated to the Good alone had been taken by the Evil. "But surely there is hope," he thought, and retracted the thought immediately, for he knew he must not think of himself so often, if at all; and yet he wondered, "Tonight?", and hoped he might be spared.

"O enviable martyr!" he heard the faithful declare, "O excellent martyrdom!", as they gathered around the new remains below.

Theophilus peered down at them—faceless shrouds of white or of black—and did not speak. The Theophili had tried to teach the faithful that the dreadful loss of soul was not martyrdom, but only loss for Good and gain for Evil and not to be admired. But the faithful, however weak in understanding, honored the dead and fed the living. And so the living Theophilus did not correct them as they envied that dead one—another shapeless shroud—but only crouched on his pillar and watched, waiting for his food and trying not to think of it.

One of the faithful took up the corpse without apparent effort and stuffed it in a basket—the very basket Theophilus, against his will, had pictured full of figs and cakes and wine—while another idly scuffed

the little spot of blood that had splashed across the tiles and boiled in the morning sun, and the rest murmured among themselves.

Theophilus wondered what they murmured. At times he had suspected them of wagering on which holy man would be lost next, and he was even tempted to speculate on the odds, but he always suppressed such thoughts as most selfish and unworthy.

The faithful looked up at last. Their faces were muffled against sun and wind. He could see only eyes. Not all the eyes were on him. They murmured again. Apparently they did not agree who was still living, or if any were. Some pointed to the blackened but still standing Theophilus who had been named Nippon before his conversion, forgetting that his right arm had fallen off and been taken away two days before. Some gestured toward the Theophilus who had been Phibionites, the most life-like corpse of all, though he had been among the first to go. And only a few made for the proper pillar where Theophilus squatted, alive.

"I, Theophilus, remain," he croaked, and then all of them clustered around the base of his column, crying, "Hail, Theophilus!" They tied a little basket to the end of his line, and as he slowly pulled it up they cried, "Theophilus! How holy you must be! Holiest Theophilus of all!"

"I, too, sometimes think those others may live on," he said as loudly as he could, not knowing if the people below could hear him. "I doze, I forget, and find myself remembering—other things, and sometimes I think that that Theophilus is looking at me in reproof. He often reproved me, before. But I can smell his death with the evening breeze. There are maggots in his eyes, you see; sometimes they move and shine and I imagine that he sees me or sees—something. I think he was Phibionites before he was Theophilus. But he may be the one who was Marcarius or Methodius. But I should not remember what my name—what *our* names were, before we were Theophili. We must never think of *ourselves*, you see, I—I am not very holy, after all."

He hoped they understood, but one cried, "You are holiest of all holy men, still living righteously on high!"

"No!" he said sharply, irritated by his obligation to correct their error, perhaps because he was eager to eat the bread and drink the water they had brought him, but suppressing as best he could the irritation, the eagerness, and all thought of anything but the objective error. "No, there is no reason to assume that I am holy at all, not even in all intention, for—you must not tell me I am holy and tempt me to the sin of pride!"

He should not have gone so far as to say *that*, he realized as soon

as he said it, for to think of himself at all was pride. He reached for his daily loaf of bread, thinking that he might avoid further sin by simply eating; but he hesitated, thinking that that in itself might be a sin, of discourtesy not to mention gluttony; and he contented himself with brushing away the fly that had settled on a greasy smear on the golden crust; but then remembered that he should not sin against the little creature, since he had no way of knowing if it were good or evil, sent from Darkness to afflict him or sent Light to instruct him somehow, perhaps by affliction . . . He resolved to refrain from molesting flies and from eating or drinking or looking at his food and drink until the faithful had disappeared over the horizon, and then he suppressed a craving to see them start and be gone. Or at least start . . .

But one faithful man was calling up to him, "We humbly beg your pardon if we have offended or—endangered you."

"You have my pardon, though I am not worthy of giving it," he said, wondering "How?" and "Why?" before he remembered his reckless criticism of their thoughtless praise a moment before. Then he explained, "You do not need my pardon, though I humbly give it, *a priori*. It is only that I must not think of holiness in connection with myself, but only of holiness in itself. I try not to. I mean, I try—to try. I—must not think, not think at all, so to speak, you see."

"We distract you, Theophilus!"

"Who am I to say?"

"We will withdraw and leave you to perfection."

"Bless you," said Theophilus, "though I am not worthy of blessing you." He frowned, provoked again in spite of his best efforts, and he prayed, "Forgive them their obtuseness," and then, "Forgive—all," as he watched the faithful following their tracks to the horizon, rising and falling behind shadows that lengthened over white gold sand that turned to zebra-hide.

Even if the faithful had not raised the question, he could not have helped wondering why he was the last, why he had been spared by Evil or saved by Good until now. The eleven others had died, their souls sucked up, drawn from their wretched flesh by the Evil One. It might be true, as the faithful suggested, that he was the holiest Theophilus of all. But it might be true that he was the wickedest. All souls might well be equally valuable to the Evil God, as to the Good one. And all might be equally vulnerable as well. The God of Evil might have taken them in no particular order at all, or he might have taken the very holiest first, the less holy later, through pride or sheer perversity.

The answer was unknowable. The question partook of pride. Theophilus tried not to think, but could not help it. Would he be more or less vulnerable when Evil besieged him, perhaps that very night? Would it matter? Would he scream? Would he fall? And when he tried to drive such thoughts away, the attempt only made him remember with some irritation that the faithful had tempted him to think when his proper course was abstract adoration of the Good.

The faithful were well meaning, no doubt, but he found himself wondering whether there might not be a certain perversity in their good intentions, whether they wagered or not. He gulped down the dry loaf they had brought him, coughing on crumbs and remembering the time when one Theophilus, the young one who had been Peter, had wavered in his dedication. He had asked the faithful to help him from his pillar so that he could return to the world. They had refused, saying, "Be holy, still. If you follow us back to the city we will set dogs upon you, and throw dung, and also stones. You must be holy! Someone must! There must be holy men!"

That youngest Theophilus was now a bundle of darkened flesh and whitened bone wrapped in its poor robe on the capital of a well preserved column, and when the breeze was strong at sunrise or sunset the bundle shed sun-glided hairs and specks of blackened scalp — as now.

"Why does the Evil One not bother *them*, if they will not bother to be holy themselves?" thought the last Theophilus, retracting the thought and praying for forgiveness as he finished the stale bread and warm water they had brought him.

And he looked from that pitiable bundle round the whole circle of columns — some still occupied in a way, some vacated — and tried to mourn in general, to forget the Theophili as they had been, especially to forget them as they had been before they took the name and renounced the world, to forget himself above all. And he dozed, and woke, and meditated and dozed again, as the shadows stretched farther and farther away, toward the city.

When the Theophili had found this center of a world of waste, a fierce, mid-day wind was just uncovering the tops of the columns, as if for them. They had realized the equivalent power of Good and Evil and left the equivocal world, wandering from city into desert, expecting to be tempted and hoping to be perfected. They had climbed their columns. The wind persisted through half that night and uncovered the pavement and rubble far below, and they saw that the temple was a perfect mystery, like the world — for the stones below were black and white, good and evil,

and so was the central altar, though it was so decayed that no one could discern what god it had been raised to honor and attract.

And they remained, not knowing whether the temple were a haven or a trap, a temptation or a trial, but knowing it did not matter if they would be holy.

For they knew the Gods were equal, the final outcome of Their struggle dubious. The power of Good was manifest even in the darkest night, by stars and by the moon, a battleground where Good and Evil struggled equally and neither held His victory for long. And even in the brightest day there were shadows of Evil, and every man lived with a shadow that was the darkest at noon.

The sun set, and Theophilus shivered, preparing for the siege of Evil in darkness. He shifted from his daily squat to his nightly kneeling, and worked his blackened, burning, lacerated hands and knees over the old familiar humps and hollows of the hot stone, turning round and round, squinting at the vague horizon, praying continuously: "God of goodness, God of light, enlighten us and lighten our burden of Evil shadow; save us from Evil, from darkness, Your brother; and accept our servitude . . ."

The whole world trembled, though nothing moved.

"Evil is coming tonight," he moaned, "unless You save me."

And Evil appeared like a mighty beast, like a wind with sand and stone in it, though there was no wind, like a black winged lion whose step was iron, striding without haste but without hesitation up over the horizon from all directions at once.

The visible world did not change. The heartbreaking bright stars wheeled on, unwavering, undclouded by the faintest breath of Evil. But he could smell that cold and fetid breath, and even the stone grew fearfully cold despite the fires that seemed to burn his hands, his feet, his brain.

And Evil came bringing the weight of the world against him, as if the whole world's round edge had reared up to roll inward, slowly, to crush him at the center. Evil approached inexorably—as a scarlet scorpion, a black man, a pale maiden who rode the sandstorm, screaming like a bird of prey, reaching with unnatural arms, with curling fingers tipped with gnashing teeth, with nests of red snakes bursting from her eyes, her mouth, nostrils, ears, for her white skin was bone, articulated like the scorpion—until there was no maiden but a breath of snakes like mountains on the close horizon, coming closer, slithering and rolling toward him—until they were not serpents but living entrails, a quivering, contracting nest, with fangs—until all this Evil dissolved into black and

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The Thirteenth Floor

by Douglas M. Dold

To the oldtime science fiction enthusiast the name *Dold* means Elliot Dold, the star illustrator for *Astounding Stories* between the issue dated April 1934 and beyond the end of the Tremaine period. If he had any illustrations in issues dated later than January 1939, there were not many. But knowledgeable veterans will recall that Elliot had a brother, Douglas, who was also connected with the magazines; and his novelet, *Valley Of Sin* appeared in the first issue (April-May 1931) of the short-lived *MIRACLE SCIENCE AND FANTASY STORIES*. Brother Elliot had a novelet in the second and final issue, which he also illustrated, *The Bowl of Death*.

IN THE DUSK-FILLED BOUDOIR the blue, fluorescent mist thickened and grew steadily, and presently a whisper sounded faintly in the silence. But neither the maid nor her young mistress noticed. They could not notice, because the mistress was too intent upon having the maid leave her, and the maid was too intent upon remaining.

Lois Carnchon had to command twice before her maid, Marie, pale and trembling, showed any sign of stirring from the boudoir. And even then the girl moved only as far as the door.

"Mam'selle Lots, 'ow can I leave you! Oh, mon Dieu, you are so beautiful and so—so strecken! You mus' not be left alone 'ere in your room in zis great 'ouse wiz ze sairvants downstairs, so far away. Your grief, it is too, too great! Let me stay, ma cherie! I beg—"



She could see wraithlike figures . . .

illustration by H. W. Wesso

Only the quiet, penetrant, final tone which the Carnchons used very occasionally enabled Lois at last to work her will . . .

After Marie had shut the door and pattered fearfully away down the echoing marble hall, Lois, wide-eyed, tall, golden, stood still for a time. Then she turned to her dressing table and took up from amongst the litter of gold toilet implements and amber and jade phials of delicate scent, the yellow-sheeted extra which she had surprised Marie reading here five minutes ago.

The headlines of the extra informed her that Ronald French had

crashed his plane in Los Angeles while piloting himself to victory in the International Amateur Sweepstakes.

Her heart informed her that if Ronnie was gone, neither her beauty nor her wealth nor her position were any good to her any more—nothing was any good to her.

While she gazed tearlessly at the paper, the blue mist began to shape itself into something which resembled a human form. But Lois was very intent upon another matter. In her bathroom cabinet stood a bottle of oxalic acid with which Marie occasionally rinsed stains from the porcelain fixtures. It would be hideous stuff to manage, she thought, but it was ready for instant use, and that was what counted.

She entered the bathroom and took the bottle from its place on the highest shelf of the medicine cabinet. Deciding quickly that it would be best to go to her bed, where she could stifle her groans in the pillows, as acid drinkers had done from time immemorial, she snapped out the bathroom light and turned. And then, in the doorway between bath and bedroom, she stopped quite still. The sudden tension of her right hand nearly shattered the bottle of the skull and cross-bones.

On the edge of the bed, looking at her, sat a white-haired old man with a tortured face. Shimmery. Real, yet evanescent. The rich blue silk of the dressing gown he wore was sticky and sodden with the blood which welled from a wound under his heart.

"Uncle John," Lois whispered.

"Yes," came back in a whisper lower still, a thready whisper. "I am John Carnchon who died fourteen months ago rather than face the poverty left me by a certain drop in stocks . . . I must talk with you, Lois."

"Why?"

"You know why. Because of that bottle you are holding."

"Ah . . . You have come back across the border to try to dissuade me?"

The old man sighed. Slowly the blood from the wound under his heart seeped down the blue robe until it began to drip upon the floor in a dark puddle. Yet Lois now found herself above being affected either by that or the old man's presence. Death loomed so close that Uncle John's appearance seemed natural; and the greatness of her own suffering prevented her from understanding his.

"Why do you do it, Lois?" he asked suddenly.

"You know what happened to Ronnie French this afternoon?"

"Yes, my dear, but even so . . ."

"Unde, I can't go on without him. The only possible thing—" Her hand closed tightly about the bottle.

"Lois." The whisper became louder, almost stern. "Lois, look at me well—at my face; at my blood. Does that not make you ask yourself if you are acting wisely? Does that not make you hesitate?"

She shook her head.

Again the old man sighed. "You see what is there, but you do not understand. Your suffering is so intense that it prevents you from understanding. Poor child . . . Lois, if I commanded you to put your bottle aside, would you obey?"

"If death," she answered simply, "brings any insight at all, you must know that I could not."

A long silence followed. A silence in which the old man and the girl each suffered according to their own destinies. Then:

"Lois, since you refuse an order to put your bottle back where you found it, and since you suffer so greatly that you are blind to the warning a dead man has come here to give you, *will* you do one thing for me?"

"What?"

"Will you, instead of drinking the acid here, go to the Hotel Belton to do it?"

"Why, that is where you . . ." She started a little.

"Yes. I want you to go to the hotel and register, and I request that when you do so, you insist upon having a room on the fourteenth floor or higher. After that, I request that you walk up to your room. Remember those two things: the fourteenth floor or higher, and walk up to your room. Will you do it for me?"

Lois stood very still for a time. The bedroom was almost dark now. It seemed to her that the figure of the white-haired man, her uncle, was becoming less distinct.

"I will do what you ask," she answered finally. "I am afraid that you can never prevent me from joining you, but I feel as if you had tried to help me . . . I am grateful."

"Good." The whisper came faintly indeed.

As she moved toward the bed, the shimmer there vanished, and the dark pool on the floor.

Though the conversation with a dead man had been a thing unparalleled in her experience, she felt no fear. Now that she herself was so close to death, it seemed but natural that she should speak with the dead.

She managed to leave the house without exciting suspicion by re-

questing the butler to tell the other servants that she felt better and was going for a walk. A taxi which she signalled on Fifth Avenue, just below the great Carnchon house, bore her slowly through the heavy traffic of the evening toward the Belton.

Beyond the park the sun had set, and lights were beginning to twinkle; the faces which filled the cars about her, the faces of pedestrians on the sidewalks, showed that that day had been fine and that the world seemed good to many. Yet always she heard the shrill cries of newsboys calling the extra, and always she saw the only one face, Ronnie's . . .

A block away from the Belton she left the cab. It was impossible to sit longer, inert, while the driver wormed through the last interminable traffic.

Indeed, as she stood at the edge of the sidewalk, with clattering trucks, squawking cabs, sleek limousines streaming past endlessly, her tearless grief became unendurable. And suddenly a thing which was almost inevitable happened, despite her original sincere intention of keeping her compact with the dead. She asked herself why she should obey that old man, her uncle. The Belton was so far away still. The downward tide of traffic had just been released by the officer in the center of the street. If she hurled herself into the midst of it . . .

But even before her resolve became firm, she gave a start and drew back. Out in the street a whistle was shrilling frantically. Brakes screeching, the down traffic came to a halt. Wonderingly, as she gazed at the man with the whistle, she saw that he was startled and unnerved, that he had become a puppet worked by some power outside himself. So great was the power that it even made its puppet signal brusquely to her to pass in front of the raggedly halted line of vehicles. The last she saw was that the man had released the cars again and was holding his hands over his eyes. In her ears sounded a thready whisper.

"The Belton. Fourteenth floor. Walk up."

"I want a suite on the fourteenth floor or higher," she found herself saying to a desk clerk a few minutes later, as she wrote her name none too steadily on the registry card the man had handed her.

The headlines of the extra glared at her from a table behind the clerk's wicket. And the man knew her, had known her uncle. It was plain that he was troubled by her appearance, unattended, at the hotel. She forestalled interference, however, by assuming a manner which he could readily question, and then, thinking quickly, she cut off his inevitable question about luggage by saying that hers would follow.

"No need for you to come up, Charles. I believe I've been in 1420 before. I will ring if I need you."

"Thank you, Miss Carnchon, very much!"

There was no one else to trouble her now. In the crowded lobby it was easy to mingle with sauntering groups while she moved toward the first of the many flights of stairs which she must ascend. She heard two men in front of her discussing the crash and herself in connection with it. They seemed to feel that it was a tough break for the girl, especially as the papers had it that her feeling for French was above ordinary; but they also seemed to feel that the Carnchon income would help her get over it. Perceiving, as she never had before, the actual worth of her money, she hugged close under her arm the handbag which contained the small bottle, and went on until she felt the soft carpet of the first staircase under her feet.

She had not reached the first landing before she knew that she was being watched, guarded, and almost guided. Try as she might, though, she could see nothing. Nor was the whisper there. It was only a sense of being surrounded by presences which would close in and cut off retreat should she turn back, or seek an elevator. Constant crushing memory of her loss made a feeling of leaden fatigue, of hopelessness steal over her. Too, she began for some reason to feel almost as if she had been drugged. But there was no fear of the entities.

On the landing between the eighth and ninth floors, when her feet dragged so heavily that she wondered whether she would ever reach the fourteenth and the oblivion she sought there, she sat down to rest. Looking about her, she realized in a dull way that this landing was identical with all the others she had passed. There was a window which overlooked the city; an ornate, soft lounge, potted palms; and, facing each lounge, almost filling the space between the two floors, a tall mirror . . . While she sat on the lounge looking into the mirror, she thought she could see a group of wraithlike figures hovering close, stealing furtive glances at her. They vanished, though, when she looked hard. She arose, mounted slowly to the ninth floor, and thence to the tenth and the eleventh.

"There is no thirteenth floor in this hotel," she thought dully as she gained the twelfth floor and turned to face the upward steps which would carry her to the fourteenth. "There is no thirteenth floor in most hotels. Many are superstitious, and that is why . . ."

And that marked the end of the first phase of her peculiar experience. No sooner were the words about the thirteenth floor in her mind, than

a dry whisper sounded beside her, and she knew that some change had come.

"You're wrong about the thirteenth floor," the whisper creaked. "There is a thirteenth floor, and, my dear, it's crowded. All permanent guests. God help us."

She stopped climbing and stood still, halfway up the steps which led to the landing between the twelfth and fourteenth floors.

There was a thirteenth floor? A floor filled with permanent guests? . . . What did it mean? And what was happening to her?

Why it was she could not say, but all at once the apathy which had made her fearless so long left her, and remembrance of the dry, husking whisper which had sounded in her ears filled her with horror.

"Uncle John," she whispered through a throat suddenly constricted, "is that you?"

Against a tapestry depicting a wine cellar in an abbey, a shadow moved oddly.

"Uncle John! Uncle John!"

Just above her, where the shadow had passed, grew on the steps a slowly widening pool of dark red. Blood was dripping heavily from a wound. No wraith of a form became visible, though, and no one spoke.

"Oh, my God! Uncle, what have you made happen to me? I wasn't afraid at first. But now—"

What *had* happened? What was there about the thirteenth floor which should—She did not know, but quick as a flash she knew she could not stand it. The elevators! She whirled to run back down to them, a scream welling up behind rigid lips.

"But you can't scream!" sounded in her ears.

And she could not. And bloody prints of naked, spongy feet slopped out on the steps below. Prints from invisible feet. Prints that barred retreat from the hideous staircase. Clammy as the touch of putrescent corruption, a hand gripped her shoulder.

"The stairs!" came a rasping order.

It was a terribly changed Lois who reeled about and faced upward, coerced by what seemed the ultimate power directing the universe. Gone the girl so stunned by shock that she could not understand the torture gleaming redly in an old man's eyes. In her place, a palpitant, golden girl confronted by stark horror.

She was standing halfway up to the landing above the twelfth floor. Since the stairs could not be avoided, the thing was to run and keep running until she reached the fourteenth floor, and the warmly lighted

corridor, and people who would come out of friendly doors at her cry. She did run, and knew that she was making headway because there flashed into view the potted palms, the ornate lounge, the mirror of the landing between the twelfth and fourteenth floors. Panting, striving wildly to reach steps which would carry her higher, she gained the landing and swung to the right—and tripped across a thing which yielded like the flesh of an invisible corpse.

A faint moan reached her ears. She fell.

After a time she realized that she had fallen across the lounge. And knew that there could be no escape. The spongy prints of naked, bloody feet guarded the stairs. If she moved, cold hands sought her ankles, pressed soggily against her shoulders. She sank back against the cushions.

"You must see what here is to be seen," whispered someone out of nothingness. "It is true that a premonition of what exists here broke though your apathy a moment ago and left you afraid. It is true that even as much as you have seen would make you think twice before drinking the contents of the bottle in your bag. But now you must see all, for you could have been spared the ordeal only had you understood the warning and obeyed the command which was given you back in your bedroom . . . There are reasons why you should not try to end your pain. You must see all, and then decide."

For a moment she beheld her own lovely image reflected in the mirror. Then, across the crystal, whirling and swirling, drifted a gray smoke out of which grew eyes—horrible, tortured eyes. The mirror remained no longer; in its place loomed an open corridor, dark and gloomy, lit wanly by a phosphorescent glare.

She could not move. Her will was gone.

Come!" Her uncle was standing beside her, his eyes swollen with pain, his face stern, his voice louder than she had yet heard it. There was no resisting him, and she arose; or at least some part that seemed herself, arose. Together they took a step forward.

The corridor did not vanish. Instead, the refracted, sulfurous light grew stronger, and, as the old man extended his arm that she might steady herself upon it, she saw that the place was thronged with people.

Men, women, garbed in an unnatural array of nightgowns, street dress, dating back to 1908 made her realize in a dim way that the Belton had taken in its first guests in that year. There was a deadness to the air, and no man or woman breathed. Many were hideous with wounds and terrible disfigurements which gaped in their flesh. The

expression of white faces was agonized beyond the power of human senses to comprehend.

"This, ladies and gentlemen." John Carnchon announced in a stiff, creaking voice, "is my niece, Lois Carnchon. You know my niece's story. Greet her and then continue with what is ordained."

Lois found herself powerless to cry out, and never for a second did the arm which supported her relax its powerful grip. While the hideous ones drew closer, darting furtive glances, whispering dryly amongst themselves, while they approached, never touching her, but always reaching with puffy, dead hands, she tried to close her eyes only to find that in this place eyes never closed.

"This, Lois," her escort told her, "is the thirteenth floor of the Belton."

"But there is no thirteenth floor! Above the twelfth floor stands the fourteenth. There is no thirteenth floor!"

"Yes," came in a sure, mournful tone, "there is a thirteenth floor. There is such a floor in nearly every house in every city in the world. Only very happy houses, or houses new and never inhabited, lack a thirteenth floor. Watch!"

She breathed an odor of death and stagnation. She wrenched backward. But she found herself held as by a strait-jacket.

"You must watch," said that mournful, leathery, voice. "It is ordained."

And the group who had crowded close fell back to flatten themselves against the wall, nightgowns, evening clothes hanging deadlly upon them, wounds showing red, ghastly. The whispering ceased. The blue lights grew brighter. The corridor was a stage, long and narrow, brightly illuminated, a stage watched desperately by rows of burning eyes.

"Let me go! Uncle, let me go!"

"You may not go."

"I tell you I can't stand it. I am breaking!"

"You will not break. You will watch to the end. It is ordained."

To the smell of death was added an odd odor of hemp. Instantly fell upon the whole corridor a leaden silence. A tall man, fair haired, handsome but for his flabby mouth, shambled forward, leading an hysterical, full-lipped woman. On one arm he bore a coil of new, hempen rope.

"Lovers who were denied each other through the bonds of marriage with another," John Carnchon said hollowly. "Instead of making something decent out of the cravings of a futile passion, they did this."

Out of the glaring blue of the corridor materialized a half visible

garret room, moldy and dusty, with stark rafters jutting through the gloom of the peaked roof. Two discarded chairs, one with a broken back, teetered in a black corner. While the woman whispered incoherent sentences, mixed words of passion and despair, the man scraped the chairs over the floor to a spot beneath a rafter. With a penknife which he opened with a click, he hacked through the rope, and, working with twitching hands, tied in each of the two lengths of yellow hemp a hang-man's noose.

As the two mounted the chairs, and the man tested carefully the strength of the ropes which he had made fast to the rafter, a queer look came into their faces. Some urge of sanity from within seemingly made them hesitate. But the moment passed. More than ever the flabby weakness of the man's mouth and the unbridled hysteria in the woman's dark eyes stood out. About their necks the nooses were adjusted and drawn taut. They bade each other a crazed farewell. The woman began to sob harshly. At a word from the man, they kicked away the chairs

...

Lois stood still, watching them die, unable to close her eyes.

The picture of the garret faded soon, and once more the corridor became visible, but now a change had come over its inhabitants. The men and women rocked back and forth in torture, and their shrieks and sobbing moans rose loud in the dead air.

"The thirteenth floor," whispered the old man, while with one hand he clawed spasmodically at the dripping wound under his heart. "Each time any one of us re-enacts his deed, all of us feel the whole pain of it. And it goes on all the time. All the time . . . "

"Uncle, let me go! I am not dead yet. I have done nothing. It is not right that I should be made to see this! Let me—"

"You may not go."

Even then the blue light from the corridor was clouding again and from the blur was emerging another room. A room in a hotel, this time. A man distinguished in appearance, with beautiful thick white hair, was reading from a paper the news that Evan Markley's misappropriation of Gulf State National's funds had been detected and that Evan Markley was being traced.

After a time Evan Markley rose and entered the bathroom. His touch on a switch flooded the room with light. From a shelf he picked up something with a black handle and a glittering blade. On a table beneath the light he placed a mirror, and then seated himself before the

glass in such a position that the hand which held the razor might be truly directed.

Presently he moved his hand. Horror came into his eyes. He slumped forward across the table. An outflung arm sent the mirror to the white tiled floor with a crash. Then it was over, and he ceased to move.

"The thirteenth floor," came a whisper as the scene faded and the corridor with its pain-wracked throng became visible once more. "Night and day are one with us who dwell here. We do not sleep. During the reaches of time we murder ourselves over and over again."

The girl beside the old man could not even moan further protest. To her shuddering consciousness came an awful whisper.

"You will watch this. This is for you. Acid . . ."

A tornado of rank mist blotted out the blue. Against the mist a blonde girl in an evening wrap of ermine stood snarling abuse at someone who never answered. The girl was spoiled, beautiful. At the one who never answered she shrieked that she would get even, and jerked from under her wrap a bottle that reeked of carbohic acid. Straight to her petulant lips she carried the bottle and drank furiously in long gulps.

When her agony had only begun, a look of consummate fear blazed into her eyes, and she hurled the bottle from her, wailing. But she wailed too late. A long splash of the acid which had spilled across the white fur of her mantle was eating visibly; and she had swallowed a yet greater amount. The girl tottered, collapsed, and lay on her side, convulsed.

While the mist faded, and the blue corridor with its ranks of suffering inhabitants began to stand out clearly again, Lois stood transfixed. She was paralyzed. Her soul was cold. The power to think, even the power to feel, had almost left her. Knowing only that during this last wrenching tragedy something had broken in her, that some vital, far-reaching change had come upon her, she felt herself swaying.

"You have stopped thinking about the bottle in your bag," whispered the old man at her side.

"I ceased to think of that long ago."

"And you have even given up the futile thought of trying to escape."

"I know that I cannot escape so long as it is ordered that I remain here, and I know that to remain is good for me."

"And you are pitying us!"

"Yes," she gasped. "Oh, yes! I—I think I am not even horrified any more. It is all so pitiable! Oh, if only I could help you, help all of you, I would do anything, give anything!"

"Ah," whispered the old man, "but if you have learned to pity us, you have seen enough . . ."

And even as Lois listened humbly to the words, she saw the blue fade out and felt herself swooping down through rushing, tearing layers of darkness. She returned to consciousness to find herself at home in her own bed. Little Marie was bending over her. Little Marie was bending over her. In a few moments she was lucid enough to understand from the torrent of excited, thankful words which poured out the moment she opened her eyes, that the manager of the Belton had found her lying on the landing between the twelfth and fourteenth floors, and had himself accompanied her home in an ambulance.

Marie did not ask questions about how she had come to be lying unconscious on that landing. Instead she moved quietly to the dressing table and turned back with the yellow envelope of a telegram in her hand.

"It came a very few minutes after you left the 'ouse, ma cherie," she said, and gave Lois the message.

Slowly, but with the quiet strength of a woman resigned to misfortune, Lois tore the flap. Slowly she unfolded the sheet which dropped from the envelope. With the thought brooding in her heart that this would bring sad confirmation of news she had received before, she yet took consolation from the knowledge that she could read and still go on bravely, steadily.

But the message was not the one she had expected.

She uttered a low cry.

"Ronald French," she read, "has suffered a fractured skull and three broken ribs, but he will recover. Resting quietly in hospital. Advise that you come to Los Angeles to be with him during convalescence if possible."

It was an hour later, just as she was leaving her room to start for the train, that she saw the last of the white-haired old man. From a fluorescent mist which shimmered in one corner he emerged. And he was smiling.

"Ronnie loved you so much," he whispered, "that he was kept alive even though another, in his case, would have died. That made it necessary that you should be saved, and to us it was given to preserve you . . . And see, Lois," he whispered on, pointing toward his heart, "what *you* have done for us! It is because you pitied us, my dear . . ."

Staring with blue eyes which widened slowly, she saw that blood had ceased to drip from an open wound beneath the heart, and that the wound itself had healed.

One By One

(Continued from page 71)

stinking blood that roared and swallowed starlight, rising around him in one wave to drown and freeze the stars.

He did not cease his prayers; by now his prayers were a maniac rush of jumbled words; but all the words were holy; but Evil rushed closer still.

"Stay!" he challenged. "Stay, Evil! go back! go back! in Your brother's name! Come, Light!"

It did not pause, it was almost upon him, so great is the power of Evil.

"I am lost," he thought, but suppressed the thought, lest he sin by doubting the power of Good.

Now Evil had flooded the world and nothing floated above It but the stone he balanced upon, and he could see that the shaft was tall, now, tall enough to reach the stars if there still were stars, but it was sinking beneath him, or Evil was rising. And Evil was not merely a monstrous fluid, now, but a living universal eye, and while he prayed against drowning in that bottomless Eye It rose to swallow him, while the only horizon, rising around him far away, was the iris of that Eye, a ring of teeth of light pointed toward him at the center.

The dark engulfed him and it was light.

For all his dread, it was an unexpected meeting: he was immersed and drowning, his soul draining from his dissolving flesh in the total dark or total light, and as It took him, It spoke to him and said, "You do not understand. I am neither He nor His. I am the Other: I am *Good*."

"But even if so," he thought while he had any thoughts that were his own, having no time to retract this thought: "Even so, this may not be a good end."



Leapers

by Robert A. W. Lowndes

While written as a "Lovecraft story", even the earlier version contained one fundamental departure from HPL—a matter about which your editor and The Master had argued back in 1936, shortly before he died: that reading "Forbidden Books", etc., *had* to bring about dreadful and horrible events, and that such knowledge leads invariably to destruction. While we would not quarrel, even now, with Lovecraft's statements that reading the *Necronomicon* would be the beginning of a Frightful End for you, we do assure you that, for a strong mind, the *Song Of Yste* need not be fatal—unless you're bored to death.

THE MANUSCRIPT WHICH FOLLOWS BELOW was sent to me by Mr. Clifford Pierce of Dorcax, Mass., Executor of the estate of the late Arnold Grayson, who disappeared in November 1942. In his covering letter, Mr. Pierce explained that Grayson's will, which was sent to him in October 1942, requested the delivery of material which would follow either to Mr. Jeffrey Barr of Charleston, South Carolina, or, in the event of Barr's predecease, to some person engaged in publishing material relating to the weird and the occult. Grayson had listed Farnsworth Wright as his first choice (he had had material published in *WEIRD TALES*, under a pseudonym that has not yet been uncovered, some years past), apparently unaware that, in 1942, Mr. Wright was

An earlier and shorter version appeared as *The Leapers*, by Carol Grey, in the December 1942 issue of *FUTURE Fantasy and Science Fiction*.

no longer acting in an editorial capacity — and, in fact, had died in 1940. If Mr. Wright were no longer in charge of any such magazine, then Pierce should act on his own judgment.

This, Pierce suggested, can be regarded as a temporary slip of memory, under the sort of stress which the mss. indicates, for internal evidence shows that Grayson should have known that Wright was dead. I am not so sure. It will be noted that Grayson had not been writing fiction for a number of years, and that there had been a hiatus in his correspondence with Jeffrey Barr, who also corresponded with many others in what was known as the Wright Circle. But if the period during which he was out of touch with the Circle, and with *WEIRD TALES* itself, was three years or longer — as it well might have been — then Grayson might have no means of learning that Wright had died.

The material which was supposed to follow Grayson's will did not arrive, Mr. Pierce states; he is reticent about its eventual discovery, telling no more than that it was found in New York City this last Winter of 1967/68. The correspondence with Barr, mentioned in the mss., has not been located. I can only add that the mss. looked as if it had been folded and kept in an envelope for a number of years.

I have checked the *World Almanac* for 1942, and have thus verified the dates given for the full moon in July and November of that year; they are correct. The almanacs for 1917 and 1920 were not readily available at the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue; and noting the frightfully shredded condition of their 1929 copy, I confess to being too discouraged to go back later and invest waiting time — which I have found to be generally three quarters of an hour at the Reading Room, when items must be brought up from "downstairs". And my earlier experience with being served shredded, crumbled, useless magazines after waiting idly (one is not permitted to bring one's own reading material into the Reading Room) added to my reluctance to go farther; so you see, I lack the ultimate zeal that makes the true scholar and researcher.

There is, or there was in 1942, a large apartment building at 2574 Bedford Avenue, in Brooklyn. In the mss., one date is a mistype, the letters "w" and "q" being piled atop each other. I have translated it as "2" but it could just as easily be "3" or for that "23" — and none of these dates might be correct for November's full moon in 1917.

The original newspapers clippings were not included, Grayson having transcribed them, just as you will see them. Mr. Vincent Barr regretfully informed me that many of his late uncle's papers were destroyed in a fire some years ago. He was most kind, and showed me a good deal of

interesting material — everything that remained, in fact — but none of this can be considered relevant to the Grayson narrative. I have no recourse but to offer what follows as fiction. RAWL

THE AVID FOLLOWERS OF DAILY papers may have noted a small item which appeared in nearly all of the metropolitan afternoon editions and which, in some instances, was recounted upon radio news-reviews. In some cases, I believe, it was carried over for the rest of that day's editions. In all papers the headlines were virtually the same; as was the wording of the story proper.

IRON SHOES WILL REPEL LUNAR
DRAG SAYS BROOKLYN
SCHOLAR

Brooklyn, New York, July 28 — That the moon is responsible for more than lightheadedness, Arthur Clarkson of 2574 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, is sure. Clarkson stated yesterday that Earth's satellite has taken to "negating terrestrial gravitation and attracting living beings to its surface."

Clarkson further stated that he, personally, had "come under the baleful influence" of the full moon and avers that only quick thinking saved him from being "drawn irresistibly upward."

"I filled my shoes with iron," affirmed Clarkson, "and what is more, I'm having a special pair made. There's something strange going on and I'm not going to be caught unawares."

When asked concerning the reason for the moon's untoward behavior, Clarkson shrugged. "I'm a student of occult sciences," he explained, "but I never came across anything like this."

"You'll have to ask the astronomers," he added. "But you can bet that from now on I'm wearing these iron-soled shoes whenever the full moon is out."

It is further worth noting that an especially long list of missing persons was read over radio station WNYC on July 28th, the reading taking more than twice the amount of time customarily devoted to this service and cutting in on a special music program scheduled to follow. Some of the names read were, of course, carryovers, but an amazingly large

number of persons disappeared "on or around the night of July 27th."

Outstanding was the fact that a large percentage of those who disappeared from the city of New York at this time were between the ages of 22 and 30, in good health, were of more than average intelligence, and were proficient in some form of the arts. With the exception of a newlywed couple, all were single and — a fact which has apparently passed without notice — were engaged in a form of literary or artistic creation which required a highly imaginative cast of mind. One of the missing, for example, was an attractive blonde of 23, widely renowned among the devotees of the more imaginative and speculative of pulp fiction as an illustrator; another, a man of 27, was in the process of becoming a favorite in the field of fantastic, cosmic horror-fiction, the general type of narrative wherein Poe, Machen, and Lovecraft specialized.

None of the missing, seemingly, had had any premonition of their impending fate; none left behind them any manner of clue as to the nature of their vanishing, nor has any word subsequently been heard from them.

The incident which resulted in my decision to investigate more fully the happenings of the night of July 27, 1942 took place, by sheerest chance, on the afternoon of July 30th, a Thursday. I was conversing, at that time, with a friend in the 42nd Street Cafeteria, idling over tall glasses of iced tea. A traffic officer, off duty, passed by our table as my colleague was describing some of the results of his research into odd disappearances, which he had been undertaking in the course of writing an article on assignment, and mentioned the extra long missing persons list of Tuesday the 28th. The policeman paused and asked us if he might join us, as, he said, he had had an interesting experience a short time back.

We invited him to be seated, and he took a page from a newspaper from his pocket, which contained the material quoted above. "I came across something like that the other night—I guess it was the same night. July 27th."

"You met someone with the same notions?" asked my colleague.

He shook his head. "Not, not exactly the same, but it was a lot like it. He was a little under the weather, and I helped him to a bus.

"He claimed he saw people flying around the News and Chanin buildings. They didn't have any wings—they were just jumping up into the air, he said. He says he was walking along and he looked up suddenly and there they were leaping from one of the windows of the

building—I forgot to ask him which. He was plenty scared, he says, but in an instant he saw that they weren't falling at all. They were soaring up, if you please—like you do in dreams when you start jumping down a long flight of stairs and find yourself floating."

I nodded. "Could he make any of them out?"

"He said they were all young people; some girls, too. One was a pretty blonde, he said. They kept on soaring higher and higher until they were out of sight. Oh, we know he was drunk and seeing his own brand of pink elephants, but I picked up this newspaper on the train today—didn't realize it was an old one at first—and saw this story. Funny how these delusions seem to run in batches, isn't it?"

(Extract from an article in the *Solitarian*, official organ of the Initiates of the 4th Orbit, dated August 1941.)

"Thus there can be no doubt but that the Truce remains in effect only so long as the balance of power between T and those of Y is maintained. But let this balance shift even for an instant, and the struggle re-ensues, for timeless are the contestants.

"Yet mightier still than the contestants is the cosmos, through which wheel unconcernedly states of existing beyond our comprehension, and beyond even *their* power to control or negate. And, even as in the past, it comes to pass in the realms of outerthness that which cannot but result in an eclipse of *their* control so that for a period of indefiniteness to man, albeit but an instant to *them*, the veil is lifted. Then we who are to surpass rejoice and can be strong in our freedom, using it as a means to learn how this momentary whim of the cosmos can become at our hands a law of sufficient permanence for the race of man.

"The forbidden book need be forbid no longer for the moment. Let it be studied by those who are prepared, let it be searched diligently for for that matter which *they* so dread our learning, that when the chance eclipse has passed, we be not found in our former state of helplessness, but can be fully prepared to fulfill the destiny of T, and with that, the destiny of ourselves."

This issue of the *Solitarian* was supplied me by a friend to whom I had mentioned the incident of July 27th. In a letter accompanying the magazine, he stated: "What K—does not mention in his article is that the period of eclipse will find the human agents of *them*, as well as their messengers, more than ever active. In fact, since we do not know how long we have been in this period of relative 'momentary' freedom, it is

possible to theorize upon the state of the world today and note what may be tokens of *their* interference.

"What, after all, has been the chief ban upon the forbidden book? The fear of what horrors might fall upon the student? No, certainly not that. Man has braved innumerable terrors before in his search for such knowledge as would give him mastery over the blind forces of this planet's nature. There has been a deeper, more insidious means of discouragement, issuing forth from all manner of temporal authorities. In those days when the Church was *the* seat of human authority, then the task of preventing the study of the forbidden book was simple; those few who could not be frightened away by propaganda concerning the frightfulness of the *Song* and the dire fate certain to befall any who dared read therein, a doom hideous beyond the most grisly punishments man-made law could impose, those paltry few were easily either tracked down and obliterated, or kept so far underground as to make their success a mockery of its propose.

"With the rise of new social and economic orders throughout our planet, this authority waned, yet did it manage to impose its will nonetheless by controlling the sources of education. Far more clever than its dooms have been the authorities' campaign of classing the forbidden knowledge with primal superstition, ignorance, and unscientific folly. No longer is it said: Read the *Song of Yste* and nameless monsters will descend upon you, or read this blasphemous text and ye shall be damned, but merely: study these things and the world will laugh at you for a fool and, if you persist, regard you as insane. This, my friend, is the most effective and dangerous weapon *they* use. You may recall that perceptive remark by Baudelaire that The Devil's cleverest trick is to persuade us that he does not exist.

"Still, I think it is clear that even so, *they* do not feel secure, nor would it astonish me to learn that *they* were aware of the coming of the eclipse. On the contrary, I would be amazed if *they* did not foresee it. Certainly *they* know that every social change, good or ill, opens up new possibilities for a re-examination of so-called 'eternal' and 'self-evident' truths. Even those changes which we consider reactionary, in that they seek to re-affirm old superstitions, etc., for the purpose of controlling the public, may in the course of trying to make their propaganda plausible to the educated stumble upon matters of which *they* would prefer us ignorant. For though the clock may be 'turned back' as the saying goes, to a certain extent, history never repeats exactly; the *same* time never comes again, as T. S. Eliot has Thomas a 'Becket

say in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Eliot, very true, limits this to the life of the individual; but it should be clear that it applies to the times of humanity as a whole.

"Thus any change whatsoever, whether that of what we consider progress or retrogress, *may* result in new study of the forbidden; and regardless of the precise manner and motivation involved, it is clear that *they* dread it. What *they* desire is total ignorance.

"Why, you may ask? It is quite obvious, my friend. The 'forbidden' holds secrets which would enable mankind to attain heights *they* fear. Remember the Prometheus legends, which, in one form or another, can be found in nearly every mythology. The gods saw in man that which would eventually surpass them, thus determined to keep man unaware of his power, and in a state of such relative helplessness that it could be hoped he would not long survive. Prometheus feared not man, but recognized that it was the law of all that is that someday the gods must be surpassed, so forbore to harm man, and sought rather to give him aid. Then the other gods made it unpleasant for him (Prometheus)—but, in no legend is it implied that they were able to kill him. They all have some form of imprisonment with or without eternal torture. Some legends state frankly that one day Prometheus will free himself, and take sides against the gods, in the final struggle ending in their being overthrown. Call Prometheus Loki, call him—or, rather it—T, but the essential factors remain: the eternal flux of the cosmos decrees that nothing is eternal, that all that is constantly changes from one form to another, that each thing carries within itself the seed of its own surpassing. (And recall that in all legends, the gods are supposed to have created man themselves, after their own fashion. 'In their own image' is, I think, a bit too literal and conducive to conclusions which do not follow.)

"Consider the struggle now taking place in the world. So far as *their* purposes go, it does not matter too much which side emerges the winner. For either would provide particular opportunities for study of the forbidden, and both would seek to suppress it—the retrogressive, despite its championship of certain types of mysticism, for fear of that which they could not control; the progressive, despite its proclaimed 'liberalism', for fear of ideas which might seriously challenge its materialistic dogmas. No—what is desired is destruction both of individuals and records in a manner which conceals the reason for this destruction. The wise man, as Chesterton wrote, wishing to conceal a leaf, but having no forest handy in which to hide it, *makes* a forest. Thus total war is encouraged, and while it is true that humanity's own stupidity constantly insures

warfare, *they* work nonetheless to see to it that this stupidity achieves their explicit purposes and goals.

"Yet, man is not to be considered entirely helpless against *them* and *their* agents. The titanic forces of T can be enlisted if only they can be reached, for there can be no doubt that the truce has ended."

At the time this letter was received, I felt a considerable dismay in that much of it was unintelligible to me, for I had been little more than a dilettante in my pursuance of the elder lore. I had, in fact, read a few of the tales of classic horror, written some more or less precocious speculations regarding them, and written a letter or so to a well known student residing in Charleston, South Carolina. He it was who had been the source of what little knowledge I possessed, and I had permitted my correspondence with him to lag; now, I could not be sure if he were still available at the old address.

Something very akin to intuition told me that if anything was to be learned from an investigation, I must commence immediately. My first thought was to write to the author of the letter quoted above, frankly confessing my ignorance, and offering to place such data as I might uncover at his disposal. But a re-examination of this communication revealed a postscript I had overlooked, stating that he was embarking on an extensive journey the very next day. He made no mention of his purpose or destination; one road was already closed to me.

The identity of "Y" and "T" puzzled me. That I should know them was evident. Obviously the writer considered this knowledge so elementary what he did not bother to refer to the principals by other than their initials.

The thing to do then, clearly, was to contact Jeffry Barr, and resume my correspondence, which became delinquent as I found increasingly less time for fiction. With this decision came a degree of caution: I would not at once bring up the subject dealt with in the other letter, but merely arouse his interest by sending him the newspaper clipping, and recounting Traffic Officer Kearns' testimony; Barr might be able to cast a good deal of light upon the phenomenon if it were, as I suspected, not an isolated occurrence, but merely an incident in a struggle as old as man. I wrote to him, then, and it was with more than a little excitement that I opened a thickish envelope, some days later, addressed to me in Barr's minute handwriting.

II

"YOUR LETTER WAS MOST WELCOME I assure you," he began, "not only because of the extremely interesting material you have found, but fully as much for its indirect admission that you have not as yet been swallowed up by any of the grisly horrors, or fallen victim to more mundane dangers. Just why so many of my sporadic correspondents apparently become stricken with coyness in regard to writing me frequently, I have never been able to ascertain; I feel much like the cartoon comic-strip villain, gotten up in generally repulsive attire, who leers down upon the quivering mass of feminine pulchritude that is the heroine and snarls, 'Why do you fear me, Nellie?' Only, my dear fellow, the sad truth is that I'm not as handsome to behold as yon villain, nor do I sport such glad rags, I never snarl at people and am really as gentle-mannered as old codger as you could find anywhere. You would never suspect me of harboring dire secrets in the recesses of my cranium, but rather expect me to burst out with Ciceronian rhetoric upon little or no provocation, indulging in endless and learned exposition of the most dull and boring nature imaginable.

"Please humor me, therefore, and do not let so great a period of time pass before writing again; you strike me as being much like myself in that you are much more facile (probably) with the pen than in dealing with the spoken word at close range. Of course, nothing will ever be done in the way of genuine communication between humans until telepathy has been perfected and every person can transmit by merely signalling the brain-wave of the party of the second part and awaiting an 'all clear' signal.

"The phenomenon of July 27th I find of particular interest, because it is so many ways parallel to former occurrences. I'm enclosing a batch of clippings which you may keep if you like (I've had photostats made of them, and these are carefully bound into my own books), although if you have no use for them, I should prefer their return to their destruction. Some of them speak well enough for themselves, but a number require amplification, and suitable allowances for journalistic distortions of the facts.

"I suggest we discuss them in order of date. The first, you see, is dated 1917; at that time, war news was the main interest of the day, so the incident was dismissed rather brusquely. However, I delved more deeply into the matter."

CHILD'S FLIGHT BLOCKED BY
PARENTS

Saybrook, Mass, November 3—Angela Ricci, 9, of Vine Street, will not be allowed to do "any more of this flying" say Mr. and Mrs. Carlo Ricci. Neighbors have confirmed Mrs. Ricci's contention that Angela had been "jumping as high as eleven feet" during the past few evenings.

When questioned, Angela said she wanted to fly to the moon. "Like Clara Scott," the child added. Investigation disclosed that a Miss Clara Scott of Classon Street had often shown interest in Angela.

"Clara said I could fly if I wanted to," insisted the child repeatedly.

A physician recommended that Angela be watched carefully, but that no further reference to her "flying" be made.

"I chanced to be visiting friends near Saybrook at this time," continued Barr, "and made a bit of an investigation of the matter myself, playing the role of an interested specialist—and perhaps misrepresenting myself somewhat. While I expected that the newspaper accounts would prove inadequate, I was not prepared for the amazing degree of indifference and sloth actually shown.

"It was necessary to sift out a good deal of superstition and general witchcraft theory from the data, but what I found was this: Angela had been observed leaping amazing heights and distances, just as in the account you sent me.* She did not have to run any great distance, although a little sprinting did seem to help. But by merely standing still, the child managed to clear an easy eight feet. (Her weight at that time was a little more than normal.)

"On the night of November 2, Clara Scott disappeared, and I believe has not been seen since. No immediate report of it was made inasmuch as her uncle, with whom she lived was apparently engaged in illegal practices and did not dare call in the police. He told inquiring friends that she had gone away for a visit, but admitted to me, after I had produced the necessary money to make him talk, that she had *flown* away.

"The man was beside himself with terror, not only because of his dread of the law, of being accused of a murder he did not commit, but also of being thought insane. Scott was no fool: he realized what would happen if he told the truth.

"The moon was full, Scott related, and he had gone up to the roof

*Barr must be referring to the policeman's story. RAWL

for a purpose he did not mention (nor did I inquire). He was astonished to see Clara standing near the edge of the roof at that time, her eyes apparently fixed upon the rising moon. She was rather flimsily dressed and his first thought was that the girl (she was 22) might be walking in her sleep. He tried to creep up on her, but before he could do so, she suddenly leaped forward and upward.

"He says he cried out at that, expecting to see her fall to her death on the rock pile below, but she continued to soar upward, moving her arms slightly as if swimming, until she was out of sight.

"Angela Ricci's 'flying' consisted, on the other hand, of mere leaps, although one person thought they saw her moving her hands in mid-air, in the same manner as did the Scott girl. But Angela was prevented from leaping before the moon was fully up—a few days later, her parents said, the girl had apparently forgotten the entire incident completely."

The next items were dated 1920.

"SECRET WEAPON" ON THE MOON SAYS WRITER

Haverhill, Maine, August 9—Claiming to have seen conclusive evidence of a "secret weapon" on the moon, Arthur Innes, amateur astronomer and feature writer, stated that he would shortly be sending a full account to the U. S. War Department.

"It's fantastic," he admitted soberly to this reporter, "but look at the utterly incredible things that have happened in the past. Look at aviation—a phenomenon which perfectly honest and capable mathematicians proved impossible.

"While I don't care to go in for speculation," he continued, "I wouldn't be surprised if the Germans hadn't solved the secret of moon-flight and were preparing bases for an attack upon the world."

When asked by this reporter just how he thought the Germans could attack the United States from the moon, Innes grinned, then continued. "It's not as impossible as it sounds," he said. "Don't forget that the gravity is considerably lesser there. Earth could easily be bombarded from the moon—they would not need much bigger guns than they used to shell Paris, or the British coast from across the channel.

"I mentioned the Germans rather than anyone else," he concluded, "because history has shown that they are the ones with the ingenuity,

perseverance, and fantastic ambition necessary to accomplish such a thing.

"But, it could just as well be Martians."

ARE WE ABOUT TO BE ATTACKED FROM THE MOON ?

(Editorial in the *Dorcx Independent*, Dorcx, Mass., September 11).

We have heard no further comment in the nation's press concerning the startling discoveries of Arthur Innes of Haverhill, Maine, who last month announced that full details of his observations were being sent to the War Department.

If, as has been thought by many, Mr. Innes is no more than a crank, and his alleged discoveries delusionary or fraudulent, then the public deserves to know it. Yet let it not be said with any justice that we are a nation of stiff-necked scoffers. Mr. Innes' contentions are fantastic, as he himself admits; yet they deserve to be investigated.

Had it been claimed some years before the event that our boys in France would be slaughtered with poison gas, loud would have been the cries that this was impossible—no nation would stoop to such inhuman methods of conducting warfare. Yet we have seen the well-nigh incredible fact (incredible in this seemingly advanced age) in addition to the unrestricted torpedoing of unarmed vessels, carrying no contraband of war.

No, we very frankly are not tossing awake of nights for fear of bombardment from the moon; we do not think it will happen. But we cannot so lightly dismiss what could well be a possibility, since a bit of vigilance could easily determine and resolve the matter. We feel the public has the right to hear the final word upon the subject from competent authorities.

IS THE NEUROTIC INFLUENCED BY FULL MOON ?

Fairview, South Carolina, September 17:—That the age-old theory of madmen and the psychologically unstable being influenced by the rays of the full moon is not entirely exploded superstition, Dr. Allen Joris of the Fairview Sanitarium revealed today.

Dr. Joris based his statements upon the evidence of charts, extending over the period of four years, showing the varying degrees of unrest experienced by a group of neurotics under his care.

These people, Dr. Joris made clear, were not lunatics, but were psychologically unbalanced, undergoing treatment which would eventually return them to their homes, fully competent to deal with reality. The charts showed a marked increase of unrest and neurotic tendencies during the full moon period.

At this period, Dr. Joris stated, there were several who showed signs of definite delusions—generally centering around a desire to fly to the moon, and a belief that they could leap off Earth when the moon was high, and be carried upwards by some agency they could not name. After the full moon period waned, they returned to normal, and usually had little or no recollection of the actions and expressions.

"I could not obtain much information from these three sources," stated Barr, "Arthur Innes, to whom I wrote immediately, made no reply and after a few months, further letters were returned marked 'removed, left no address.' However, a Mr. Julian Klein, attached to the staff of the *Dorcas Independent* told me in an interview that his editorial was partly based upon stories of mysterious disappearances around the time that Innes' first statement appeared. To go into details would be repetitious: they are similar to the reported phenomena of July 27, 1942.

"I looked into these cases myself and confirmed that five men, four women, and several children vanished at around this time, and managed to get definite claims of their having been seen leaping great distances from various parties. There seemed to be a definite reluctance to impart information, and inasmuch as my health was not good at this time, I was unable to make so full an inquiry as I should have liked to have made.

"Particularly strange, however, was the disappearance of Innes, for I spent some time with relatives in the area, in order to investigate, and obtained several contradictory stories concerning it. He seems to have told some acquaintances of his intention to investigate the 'moon plot,' as he termed it, first hand, although at no time did he say anything about an interplanetary vehicle of any type. But one neighbor of Innes admitted to having seen an object in the sky on a certain night when the moon was full; it was moving away from Earth and soon became indistinguishable. He sent into the house and got a pair of glasses, but was unable to find the object thereafter; he could not give a clear description of it, but said that it might have been a man, inasmuch as his first impression was that of a man falling. As he watched, waiting to see if a parachute

would appear, it grew smaller rather than larger, and he realized at that point that it was departing rather than coming.

"Other neighbors claim to have seen Innes on Earth after the passing of the full moon for that month, saying that he finally went away a week or so later. In this regard, the person who saw the object in the sky admitted to having seen an individual in and around the Innes estate, but did not think that individual was Arthus Innes himself—there was a resemblance, but he was sure that the person he saw after the night of the last full moon was not Innes.

"Upon my return, I managed to see Dr. Joris, who revealed that one patient escaped from the sanitarium at around this period and that all attempts to locate her failed. She was a young woman, of a generally ethereal build, and had given indications of being under the prevalent 'flying' delusion. In respect to this, a friend of hers let me see some pages from a diary she kept—I managed to borrow them overnight, and copied them out. Here are the most important excerpts:

" . . . perhaps not yet, not yet, even after these terrible months, for the power of Y is strong even though the moon waxes upon me. But I shall leap, leap to the distant sanctuary where we build our fortress and wait the day of awakening and be with Kim again.

"Oh the ecstasy, the indescribable delight—my whole being trembles at the remembrance of that night when together we leaped above the rooftops and rode the four winds. How silly was I, little fool, to be afraid and think of wickedness and the sin of witchcraft and the dread of burning. But that is the way of those of Y—bitterly have I learned their ways and I must wither here alone unless these heartless bars can move and the moon beckon again.

"No—not to despair, but to feign submission, to give the lie and the denial and walk the blind ways so that they suspect not and suffer me to depart from this confinement. We are learning that, learning to pretend and feign we do not remember after the call has come and gone unanswered. Sometimes I think it would be better if we could dissimulate even when the rays beckon, but the ecstasy will not let us rest and we are helpless. Oh Kim, Kim, are you safe, my darling—if only you could be with me and reassure me that T will not fail us.

"I must make one more attempt, one supreme effort to act, as they call normal, when the call comes—just long enough so that I may slip out into the courtyard . . . '

"The 'Kim,' whom this woman mentions, had disappeared a few months before her confinement in the sanitarium—it was thought that the loss of her lover was the primary cause of her breakdown."

The final clipping is not dated.

SURREALIST FILM RECALLS WEIRD MYSTERY

Marseilles, France, June 7—Jean Cocteau, author of the surrealist cinema *Blood of a Poet* told reporters today that one sequence in the film had its basis in an unexplained mystery of some years back.

In the film, the dreamer sees, through a keyhole, the macabre event of a child being taught to fly; a little girl is shown gliding up a wall and across a ceiling.

This was based, says Cocteau, upon the strange case of Mimi Jerveau, the Flying Child of the Circus.

It was claimed by the showmen that the child, in her sensation "flying act" was not supported by wires or any other artifice, and that it was necessary to weight her with heavy iron bells in order to attain the illusion of gliding over the top of the great tent.

Cocteau tells of the time he visited Madame Jervau to find her rehearsing with Mimi; he was struck, upon that occasion, he says, with the impression that the girl suffered from the confinement of the room, and the restrictions of the act. Madame Jervau mentioned something about Mimi's being permitted to "fly free" if she put on a good performance that week.

It will be remembered that Mimi Jerveau and her mother left the circus at the end of the season and that nothing has since been heard of either of them. The Flying Child of the Circus was never fully explained, although a number of alleged "exposes" have appeared in the more sensational journals.

"There have been many other such cases," continued Barr, "over the course of the last twenty-five years, and they seem to have slowly been increasing. The event of July 27th, however, leads me to suspect that the power of T is nearing an apex which will bring the hidden conflict into an open struggle once more. Your studies should have made you well enough aware that we poor mortals are little more than pawns in this conflict, which is older than Earth or the galaxy we know—al-

though the latest discoveries anent the birth of our planet indicate that not only our world, but all the other planets, the sun, and the visible stars were created at the same time—approximately two billion Earth-years back.

"It is possible to attach too much importance to this conclusion on the part of such unimaginative people as star-gazers, yet it tends to show that T is indeed gaining mastery and some of the actual facts about the world and universe we know are beginning to filter through. Those who have studied the *Song* could, of course, have saved these beknighted plowhorses much trouble, inasmuch as the fact of the simultaneous creation of all known worlds is not only given there, in its clearest possible form, but is also prevalent, in one form or another, in all the myths, folklore, and religions come down from the ancient days. *And who is Prometheus but T?*

"The day of Y's power is not yet passed—perhaps it will last throughout the life period of homo sapiens, but I am inclined to doubt it. Clearly the life-force is the great interference factor which will eventually surpass and do away with Y, and we, as a highly advanced life-form, may well play a prominent role in the final conflict."

III

UPON FINISHING THIS LETTER, I was torn between two desires. The first was to sit down and reply immediately, telling Barr what I deduced from his material, and sending him the *Solitarian* and K material. The second was to drop the entire business. A feeling of unease and unreality seemed to permeate me; I found it impossible to write anything coherent. Finally I yielded to this and went out into the street, walking aimlessly.

And this was the pattern of my nights for over a fortnight, until I began to feel alarmed. Somewhere was the thought that my steps were being directed, yet I could not find any underlying similarity about the neighborhoods and localities I visited. The only thing I remembered was that I would stop now and then to look at the displays in the window of an art store or second hand book store. And the time came when I determined, as I set out, that I would seek medical, or perhaps even psychological help tomorrow.

It was a dampish, fog-ridden night, punctuated by rifts of spidery rain; the pavements gleamed in the wan effulgence of corner lamps; the smooth expanse of well-nigh deserted streets reached out lazily into the

murky distance. Yet for all that, man and his works seemed very real and very close to me and I was grateful. I strode by darkened shop windows, occasionally pausing to eye some display, stopping at bookstores to scrutinize their wares in the halflight, smiling upon the cold hauteur of mannikins and the sardonic semi-leer of liquor shops. The buildings around me rose to unseeable heights, and occasionally a single rectangle of light peered down at me from invisibility. Now and then the whoosh of busbrakes, as the golden vehicles halted to discharge passengers, roused me from my partial coma, but this was very seldom and I let the night and the fog and the wispy rain envelop me.

Yet, for all the dreamy aspect of it, my thoughts purred deep within my subconscious. From past experience, I knew what would come of this drifting: suddenly a thought would come to me out of the deeps of my being with the clarity of a bell note on frosty air, and I would thus have arrived at a long-thought-out conclusion.

Yet thus it was not to be this night, for I found myself suddenly leaning against a window, my arteries pounding furiously at what I saw. An antique show it was, a window filled with the loot of time, but what caught my eye was a large, mawkishly framed painting with the title lettered boldly thereon.

THE LEAPERS

And a name literally leaped into my mind—a name that I had forgotten: Stewart Carradyne. I had known him in college, a strange, brooding character who drew fantastic sketches and painted weird pictures, but could not be persuaded to try to sell them or even to turn his talents to commercial use. But the moment my eyes fell upon the painting, I remembered—he had shown me preliminary pencil sketches I had thought overwhelming, but they were as nothing compared to the finished work.

Here was a lake of molten fire, fraught with such colors I had never dreamed a living man could mix—a hellish lake, yet imbued with such livid realness that the eye was captured and drawn into it. There were mountains that were the nightmare symbols of a Creator gone mad; there were trees whose sinuous shapes no thing of cellulose could take. Yet these were but the fringes of the picture, the mad decorations, for even more outre was the center. It showed a company of men and women, all glaringly nude, leaping from a knolly prominence, leaping up into the star-litten sky. A passion and a dreaming and an ecstasy was upon their faces, and a beauty which made the lurid ugliness of their surrounding thrice revolting. Up into the blue purity of the sky they leapt, cast-

ing no glance behind them, toward an orb of glowing gold that seemed to be reaching out to them. It was a full moon, swimming in an aether of fairy blue which wafted down to mingle with the drab hues of the atmosphere—hues which became ever more murky as they neared the ground.

And the radiant leapers swarmed upward from a single point, diverging thence in a perpendicular thrust so that their flight was representation of the letter "T"; and the tongues of the phosphorescent slime that licked forth from the surface of the nightmare lake, and the contours of the devilish mountains, and the abominable tentacles of the ghastly trees made symbols of the letter "Y."

Weak and trembling, I leaned against the glass, my fingers clawing for something upon which to hold. At length I regained enough composure to jot down the name and address of this shop, resolving to return the next day and purchase this painting. With difficulty I managed to flag a passing cab, and give the driver instructions, then sank back into the cushions of it, spent and quivering. I do not know how I managed to get out of the cab and to my apartment, but manage it I did, and my lasting waking recollection was one of remembering that Stewart's special symbol had been signed to the picture.

The next day I lost no time in tracking down the antique shop and obtaining the unknown masterpiece. In the light of day, it was garish enough, but only by artificial illumination did the full power of it come forth. The dealer was apparently only too well pleased to dispose of it, and my somewhat handsome offer under the circumstances made him eager to give me what information he could about it.

It had come into his hands about three or four months before, and had lain undiscovered in a back room until his fiancée, apparently a highly sensitive person, had found it and urged its immediate destruction. This he had been loth to consummate, and he had managed to come to an agreement with the girl: he would display it in the window for a week, then if no one took it off his hands, consign it to the flames. Had I come a day later, he told me, I would not have found it.

About the person from whom he had taken it, along with a number of other, more orthodox paintings, he could tell me little. The man was not an artist, he believed—at least he was not the person responsible for *The Leapers*. Upon examination, he managed to find a name and address. I took it, thanking him with an extra bill, and made my way home, stopping en route to examine telephone books and directories.

My search was fruitless, and, after three days of intense labor, I had to admit failure. There was only one Harry Trevor I could find who had at any time resided on Joliet Place, and he had been killed in an auto accident some weeks before. I wrote to Barr that night, bemoaning my fate, for I had no idea where Stew might be these days. I also included the *Solitarian* and K material.

His letter in reply, however, was decidedly cheering.

"You are exceedingly fortunate in having obtained *The Leapers*, inasmuch as I, and a good many others have sought it in vain for several years. How strange that Stewart Carradyne is a one-time acquaintance of yours! He did go into commercial art a few years after you both graduated from college, when he learned that the inheritance upon which he had counted amounted to very little after all. He managed to make a rather precarious living—I think at one time he was associated with Hannes Bok. Excuse me for a moment; I am sure that I have a letter from Hannes around somewhere which mentions him . . .

"Later . . . I do hope I did not keep you in for the four hours it took me to find that letter. Dear me, I keep telling myself that I must put my papers in order, and little jokes like the above aren't much compensation for the extra work my laziness is constantly imposing upon me . . . Well, I have a letter from Hannes dated 1939, in which he tells me that Ray Bradbury is going to show some samples of his work to Farnsworth Wright at *WEIRD TALES*. I replied that I did hope that Wright would be impressed, for as delectable as Mrs. Brundage's covers were to the more erotic-minded readers, few of them were truly weird. (I assure you that I have never objected to well-exposed depictions of delightful-looking young girls—but maintain stubbornly that a girl cannot be both delightful-looking and weird at the same time.)

"At any rate, Hannes says here that he has met this fellow Carradyne and his stuff is really terrific. He'd have to tone it down an awful lot in order to have it accepted, but if he were willing to go easy, he could do the most horrific commercial covers ever. He asked Stewart to prepare some tamer samples for Ray to take along to Wright . . . That's Hannes for you—always so eager to help someone else with talent, without for a moment thinking that he might be spoiling his own chances in the process! But I suppose that one could have said the same of HPL, and I must confess to having been guilty of the same offense in the past—which is why my own published output is not so great as it might have been.

"At any rate, Carradyne did not take the opportunity Hannes offered

him—perhaps just as well, since we might have lost Bok—but did get enough work to keep him going, while he did his serious paintings in between-times. He is now under psychiatric care. He completed four large canvasses, macabre to the point of madness, which is saying something when you consider some of the stuff by Dali, etc. The titles were, in order of composition: *The Leapers*, *Seepage*, *The Lightning*, and *The Vanquished*. A mutual acquaintance managed to get very good color photographs of all four, and sent me copies—a good thing indeed, since it was upon his attempt to display this last in an exhibit that Stewart was committed to a sanitarium; only two people besides Carradyne are known to have seen the original, one of them being the fellow who took the photographs. The other was a medical student, with whom I later became acquainted, and he told me that, good as the photographs are, they cannot give the effect of the original.

"*Seepage* and *The Lightning*, while extreme, are bearable, as is *The Leapers*, he says. *The Vanquished* is something which, however I pride myself on verbal expression, I just cannot describe; you will have to visit me in the spring. Even for all its reported deficiencies as compared to the original, you will see my difficulties. I cannot hope to do as well with a description of the others as you did of *The Leapers*, but the following should give you some notion of the two that followed.

"*Seepage* shows a village scene, numbers of men, women, and children in it. The colors are quite natural; the scene is normal except for the horror—an utterly hideous intrusion of viscous blackness, gobs and masses of it, apparently oozing through rifts in the sky. There is one cloud of purest white, from which the horrid stuff is also seeping. The masses are shown falling some striking the earth, while one or two of the characters have become aware of the occurrence and are staring upward, their entire beings transfixed with horror. One young woman has been struck by a sort of splash from the grisly stuff and she is screaming, her body contorted so that all the sweet young curves of her are shrieking lines of fear. It is not a thing for ordinary people to see.

"*The Lightning* is a night scene. It shows another group of townspeople gathered on a hill during what appears to be a storm. Only the clouds in the sky are fearful shapes, and great bolts of lightning are issuing upward from the ground, clearly attacking them. The faces of the people are strained, but courageous, showing anxiety as they watch this weird duel. One great lightning bolt is striking a cloud and dissolving it; the rain is falling on the village below—the humans are not touched by it. But wherever the rain is striking, the outlines of objects seem to

by wavering and melting away. I believe the symbols of T and Y appear in this one.

"I shall see if I can find any trace of Stewart Carradyne, but cannot offer bright hope of success."

Before I could answer, a postcard came with the following note.

"Luck is with us. Carradyne has been removed to, of all places, Fairview Sanitarium. (You will remember the establishment mentioned in one of the clippings I sent you.) He is still alive and, what is most important, can be seen, if the proper wires are pulled. I cannot make the trip myself—the sawbones now has me confined to bed—but if you are able to make the trip, I think it can be arranged. Will drop you a note shortly as to details."

IV

THERE WAS LITTLE DIFFICULTY in seeing Stewart Carradyne after all. A few matter-of-form questions to be answered, then I was escorted to a rather large, comfortable room and left alone with the occupant. Apparently the man was not in a dangerous state.

As he looked up, and a flash of recognition came into his eyes, I saw that he had changed very little. A bit gray about the temples, but otherwise the same, aloof quiet person I had known years before. He arose and grasped my hand.

Some instinct told me not to waste time with amenities. I eased myself into chair he indicated, then came directly to the point.

"I found *The Leapers*," I stated simply.

He nodded, a faintly hopeful expression around his mouth. "Did it mean anything to you?"

"Much." I told him of the events of July 27th, and of what I had learned since then.

He nodded again, swept his hand across his brow in the gesture I known in earlier days. "I went too far," he said. "It was a mistake to show *The Vanquished*. I knew well enough of the forces we face—yet, in a moment of weakness and pride . . ." his voice trailed off.

He blinked twice at me, and I remembered the code we had worked out in college when he wanted to tell me something of importance.

"Remember old Professor Stratmeyer? He was kind enough to look in on me a month or so ago—how he knew I was here is quite beyond me, but he was on his way to Bristol and stopped by. Was asking

about you and Carl Rennick—who was working in a warehouse in Queens the last I heard of him."

I chuckled. "Lord, yes. Good old Stratmeyer with his proofs that the Earl of deVere or whoever it was really wrote most of Shakespeare's plays."

"But tell me," he asked, "what is happening? Is the war widening, or does it look as if it will be over soon?"

"I don't think it will be over soon," I replied. "I think the Nazis have lost their chance for a win, and now it is going to drag on until the German armies are thoroughly beaten this time. But they won't give up easily, even if something happens to Hitler. They might try for a negotiated peace, but our side won't accept, so the war will go on until they are completely ruined."

He nodded. "That is what I feared. It means that the time is not far off. *They* seem to be winning in this, but *their* very success will help to break the barrier so that *T* can emerge . . . But what a terrible price. If only the warnings that we had could have been heeded . . ."

"Tell me about the Leapers," I said. "I know so little. What of them?"

He bowed his head. "Martyrs, many of them—very few had sufficient knowledge when the call came. A certain amount of study will open you to the call, if you are responsive, but much more is needed to protect yourself. The laws of the cosmos through which we can leap to the sanctuary do not guarantee that our bodies will survive the journey. Other laws must be learned through which we can safely cross the near-vacuum of space and reach our destination on the moon."

He went to the desk in one corner of the room. "I have not been idle here: they let me have a number of my personal books and papers." He blinked twice again. "I've been tracing hints to be found in the stories and songs of the thirteen century—the Age of Faith as it was known—and there are a surprising number of them buried in what appears to orthodox piety if one knows what to look for . . . I suppose *it* knows what I am up to, but *it* is prone to underestimate our strength."

"*It?*" I asked.

"An agent of Y—whether human or posing as human, I do not know as yet . . . but let me read you this passage I have worked out from some canticles; it will clarify matters considerably I think. And your friend can give you further assistance later . . . I doubt that you'll be permitted to see me again."

"You mean—something will happen to you?"

"Perhaps. That *it* will attempt to effect my 'natural' decease in the

not too distance future, I do not doubt. I am not unprepared, but how adequate my weapons are cannot be told until the time comes." He rummaged in the desk a bit, then drew out a sheet of paper. "Here we are. Listen carefully—"

His words broke off as the door opened and the gentleman who had been introduced to me as Dr. Joris stood in the portal, a faint smile upon his face.

"No, my friend," he said, "I shall not forbid your listening to Mr. Carradyne's work, nor to his reading it to you. In fact, I really owe you an apology for this intrusion. But bear with me, and let me say a few words before this continues."

He took a cigarette from his case, lit it leisurely.

"You are a highly imaginative person, sir. In a way, I admire you, partly because I am just a plodder, as it were, and even so socially desirable a profession as mine can become dull at times. When that occurs, I and my colleagues often find stimulation in the literary, artistic, or poetic works of such people as yourself.

"But I think you will agree that a stimulant can be overdone—can be carried to a point, where it is no longer a man's valuable servant, but his master. That can only result in tragedy—tragedy such as I have often witnessed here."

His words, calm, spoken with a sort of kindly assurance, fell like leaden weights upon my ears. I think it must have shown upon my face. He smiled again, sadly.

"If you would care to see me before you leave, I shall be happy to talk with you; I have often enjoyed your writings."

"A moment, please, Dr. Joris," came Carradyne's voice, somewhat strained but still calm. "You will undoubtedly be interested to know that I have found the key to the serpent rune."

Was I imagining, or did Joris start?

"I see that I have been a fool again," went on Carradyne, "but we mortals often are. You are indeed efficient; you have taken just the right approach to make my friend doubt me, make it impossible for my message to be effective. But you are at my mercy now; will you withdraw, or shall I chant the rune?"

Joris fixed him with an icy state. "I'm afraid it is you who are under my care, Mr. Carradyne."

"You think I am bluffing! So be it then." And he began to speak, quickly in strange accents, in a tongue full of sounds I never imagined

could come from a human throat. Joris stood stock still, but I noticed that his left hand was making odd motions.

And a chill was stealing into the room—it seemed that the room was beginning to fade from my view and that the two stood at grips with each other in empty space. Louder and more powerful grew the accents from Carradyne's lips and now Joris was indeed making gestures with his hands, and counter-accented were issuing from his lips. A roaring began to fill my ears, a roaring as of titanic winds screaming out of the depths of space; I shuddered as space around me rocked with thunderous discords until at last a shrilling that nearly burst my brain asunder threw me down.

When I opened my eyes, Carradyne was bending over me. "Quick," he whispered, "brush yourself off before someone comes and it is thought that I attacked you."

"But—Dr. Joris—" I stammered.

"It is gone, but I cannot leave yet. There is still work for me to do before the call comes, and this place will be safest for me now. Remember—and keep in touch with Barr." He gripped my hand. "Go now. Go quickly, but don't appear to be in a hurry. And if you see anything odd outside this room, don't look closely."

I wish I had heeded that last piece of advice, but I just couldn't help myself. It only took half a minute, but that was too much. How I managed to get out of the Sanitarium then without arousing attention, I'll never know. I have vague memories of running down the long hill to the railroad station, and boarding a train on the verge of collapse. Was the train there when I arrived? I don't know—yet it seems to me that this must have been the case, for obviously my behavior was not noted as unusual, and I cannot think of any other explanation than that it was assumed I was trying to make a train just about to pull out.

V

SHAKEN AS I WAS, I still did not forget Carradyne's code messages, and a couple of days later went to the Bristol warehouse in Queens, representing myself as a Mr. Rennick, and asked for a box left there by a Mr. Stratmeyer. Carradyne had obviously made careful arrangements—I wonder what—for the manager of the warehouse was clearly trying to conceal a conspiratorial air and carefully refrained from asking what would be normal questions. I can only deduce that his instructions were to deliver the box to someone who claimed to be

"Rennick" without asking for identification, etc. He looked into his files and said, "Oh, yes—Mr. Carl Rennick of Boston," and that was all.

It was a small package, but I was sure what I would find inside: a complete transcription of the Dirka translation of the *Song Of Yste*. I can say now that to the general follower of weird and occult fiction, and to anyone else who has not obtained a certain minimum background, this "forbidden" book would make very dull and disappointing reading for the most part. There are a few fascinating passages—and these are the ones you have seen quoted in various horror tales. But the vast bulk reads like a cross between translations of excessively obscure Hindu poetry and a philosophic commonplace book, compared to which the most chaotic sections of the books of Charles Fort are a marvel of coherence. Nonetheless, the material is there for those who know how to read it—it is a case of having to know most of the answer before you can ask the right questions; but the important thing is that here you do find essential missing elements. And I found what I needed, as Carradyne said, in the thirteenth section.

It was there, I mean. I copied it out and sent it to Barr, because it was still beyond me. I fretted for a fortnight, but when his reply arrived—the longest letter I had yet seen from him, and that miniscule script of his even smaller than usual, on both sides of twenty-two sheets of paper—I nearly dropped my magnifying glass on the concrete floor of my basement apartment in my eagerness. I can only give a few excerpts of the more general material.

" . . . and after all, what it comes down to is the underlying and usually unquestioned attitudes. The anonymous Initiate of the Fourth Orbit refers to 'we who are to surpass' in a manner which shows that he is thinking of a small group of supermen, and that is the way that most so-called adepts look at it: we are the elect, the chosen, the cream of the crop, and so on. Dear me, I do agree at times that such are indeed the top, but I should have to go to the barnyard to find the substance that they are the top or cream of . . . It is true that the phrase does occur in the *Song*—but it refers at the *very least* to the entire human race, each and every member thereof, from the first to the last. Whether this is to be considered a basic potentiality in every human being which may or may not be fulfilled, or a potentiality which, in the 'eternal' manifestation of the universe shall be fulfilled under circumstances that we cannot yet imagine, but which require at the very least indefinite continuity of each individual life, is something I do not press upon

anyone. I only mention that, when read in a certain way, the *Song* confirms the basic teachings of all the great religions.

"Who are what is it that is to be surpassed? Who or what is the enemy? *They* are inimical, true. *They* fear us, true, as we fear *them*; but might it not be that we both have the *same* enemy? And might it not be that the reason why *they* can do damage is that they feed our true enemy?" . . .

" . . . "'K' is very apt in his use of Chesterton; but I wonder if he makes the mistake of assuming that it is *only* the 'forbidden books' like the *Song* that *they* seek to destroy (as well as getting individuals who 'know too much' out of their bodies and maintaining the prevailing attitudes upon what that means), under the cover of war's indiscriminate destruction and indiscriminate slaughter even when certain types of persons are selected for being rubbed out for political and or terroristic purposes. Would it not also be necessary to destroy every copy of the biggest selling book of all in the Western world? . . . Actually, this is not an immediate necessity as the way in which religious organizations generally operate insures that the truth will be concealed in the manner of Poe's *Purloined Letter*. As I think upon it I suspect that there is yet another purpose in the campaign against the 'forbidden books': to divert attention; to maintain the illusion that the facts and truths we need can be found only in such arcane puzzles as the *Song of Yste*. You know, I do get somewhat irritated with these tomes at times, despite the fact that they provide valuable resources without which we would have to undergo a great deal of rediscovery. But I wonder often if it might not be better were we forced to start afresh, thus eliminating the problem of having to scrape off the Ancient Imbecilities that encrust the Ancient Wisdom. Dear me—aren't our own present-day, up-to-date imbecilities enough?" . . .

" . . . and 'K' also displays that very particular corruption which, I suppose, none of us can get away from entirely: the tendency, once we realize that the universe is so set up that 'good' does come out of 'evil' to decide that therefore *some 'evils' are really 'good' after all!* . . . "

But that is all there is time to quote, and I shall include Barr's correspondence along with this account. It is not easy these days to go about my business, as I must to a certain extent, wondering as I walk along the streets which, or how many people I see are actually replicas of hu-

man beings like Dr. Joris. And some editors! The contest between 'It' and Carradyne destroyed the illusion and I saw a shell in the corridor of the sanitarium, a shell that was already partly dissolved. It must have been entirely gone before anyone else came by.

The only consolation lies in knowing that it will not be long before I am ready to respond to the call—the call at which I will leap up into the sky, protected from the near-vacuum and the radiations that lie without Earth's atmosphere. What I will find, what my lot will be, in the sanctuary is still, I very much suspect, beyond imagination.

Arkya, send out your beams that I may answer!

Statement by Clifford Pierce, appended to mss. above:

Dr. Allen Joris resigned his position at Fairview Sanitarium in 1942, his letter of resignation being dated April 7th, to be effective in October. The records show that he left the sanitarium on October 22d. His brother, Steven, wrote me saying that Dr. Joris died in laboratory explosion in 1944, his remains being identified by dental work and the evidence of shell fragments in his right knee. This letter, as well as photostats from the newspaper reports, are in my files.

Mr. Stewart Carradyne was released from Fairview Sanitarium on March 17th, 1943, stating at the time that he was going to visit his only sister in Dorcax, Mass, Mrs. Albert Dennis, now deceased. Mrs. Dennis had no surviving relatives at the time of her death. I have been unable to trace Mr. Carradyne, and no one at the Cranston Home recalls Mrs. Dennis having spoken of her brother.


Mr. Jeffry Barr died at the age of 73 in 1948, after an attack of flu, which weakened his heart. His nephew tells me that he was active and alert in his studies and correspondence to the last, and displayed no abnormalities of behavior (beyond the normal eccentricities of a semi-recluse bachelor) during the year and a half in which the younger man was staying with him.

Mr. Grayson normally spent several months a year in the basement apartment in New York City to which he refers in his account, and during such periods he was generally out of touch with anyone in Dorcax. He was generally engaged in research for articles during this period, but was always reticent about contacts in the city, outside of editorial relationships, about which he would speak freely and often very entertainingly. It was thought that, at the time of his disappearance, he was

working for the War Department in some capacity, but I have been unable to verify this.

Since he paid his rent in full for a year at a time, although the apartment was unoccupied most of the year, and was frequently absent therefrom for a week or more even during his residential months, no suspicion of his disappearance arose until the editor of the *Catskill Review*, to whom Grayson was supposed to deliver a manuscript on Monday, November 23rd, became alarmed at not hearing from him. Grayson had never missed a deadline before, and had been contributing to this publication over a period of four years. I met Mr. Edmond Oliver, who graciously turned over his files of correspondence with Grayson; none of this seems to be relevant to his disappearance, however, but the investigation indicates that Oliver was the last person to have seen Grayson in his "normal" course of business. They had lunch together on Saturday, October 31st, and which time Grayson spoke of taking a trip to Charleston, assuring him that he would be back in time to complete the article under discussion. Oliver further states that he had a telephone conversation with Grayson on Tuesday, November 16, 1942, wherein Grayson mentioned having returned from Charleston, and again assuring the editor that the mss. would be ready on time. C. P.

The moon was full on the night of Sunday, November 22, 1942. Arnold Grayson could not be located the following day or thereafter.
RAWL



THE EDITOR'S PAGE

tor, part of Heaven for me will be the opportunity to read at length without fatigue or other interruptions that mortality presents. And, among other things, to find out what *really* happened in history.

Interestingly enough, in Dr. Keller's delightful novel, *The Devil and the Doctor*, the "Heaven" scenes take place in or near the celestial library, and one gets the distinct impression that censorship, expurgation, and bowdlerization are unknown there. This novel was in effect censored and banned by the publisher, quite deliberately killed and withdrawn shortly after publication. It is good therefore to hear that copyright was renewed by Mrs. Keller and that the chance for a re-

(Continued from page 5)

print exists. Certainly at a time when the complete Marquis de Sade can be obtained in paperback, complete with its diabolical philosophy, Keller's comparatively mild criticism of conventional religion (and absence of eroticism) would not be found offensive. More likely, present day publishers might not find it offensive enough!

As Robert A. Madle's letter which we ran in our last issue indicates, *The Abyss*' appearance here very nearly amounts to a first publication. Only a few hundred copies of the book actually achieved circulation in 1947; so while a handful of MOH followers may have read this story before it will be new to nearly all of you. RAWL

It Is Written...

First of all, my thanks to a Doer Of Good, namely Mr. Stanley Zebrowski of Chicago, who sent me a list of 37 relevant authors, citing full names, pen names, birth dates, and death dates where applicable. A fair amount of this was new information to me; and the majority is information which I did not have handy—so now that I have it here, it will be most helpful.

The line between horror and humor is sometimes a rather thin one, for humor really is concerned with the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. Certainly there is

horror in House Bill 185, Public Acts of Tennessee for 1925, wherein Section 1, reads: "That it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the Universities, Normals and all other public schools of the State which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals."

Bigotry of any sort, when bigots are in a position of power, results in mind mutilation as bigots enlist

all the coercive forces of society to prevent people from learning anything beyond a given static point of officially accepted "truth". And it makes no difference whether this is labelled "revealed religious truth" or "established scientific fact; the result is exactly the same, although details may differ widely. Nor does it matter whether the teachings or hypotheses or theories in question are acceptable.

Those scientists, some of whom who boasted about not reading the book, who tried to suppress Immanuel Velikovsky's *Worlds In Collision* in 1950 were behaving in the same bigoted manner as the majority of the legislators of Tennessee in 1925, some of whom boasted about not having read Darwin, but nonetheless sought to suppress his ideas. In both instances a type of ignorance was proclaimed the height of virtue, and in both instances the "pure-minded" Knew The Truth (although, of course, a True Scientist calls it Facts). Both were afraid to let the public see a well-written, well-documented thesis which they considered heresy; both agreed in behavior, however they might denounce it in other areas, which they considered neutral, with the Roman Catholic Doctrine that Error Has No Rights.

The 1925 exhibit brought forth the test case of John Scopes, which was one of the most fabulous and fantastic episodes in American history; and L. Sprague de Camp has written a book about it: *The Great Monkey Trial* (Doubleday, 1968; 538 pages, including Notes, Bibliography, and Index, plus introductory material: \$6.95), which is as fine historical writing as I have seen in

many a year. It has all the virtues of both de Camp's fiction and previous factual material (and some of the faults, but virtue runneth far ahead) and only exhaustion forced me to lay it down twice unfinished. Since I want to discuss it at greater length in *FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION*, I shan't say any more here than that I hope you won't wait that long to get a copy. For there is horror, as I indicated above; but this is also a bizarre and magnificently funny book, and the entire episode is worthy of one of Mark Twain's most outrageous and hilarious inventions.

Back in 1941, there came a time when Donald A. Wollheim said to me, one day, "Doc, do you think you can write a Lovecraft story?" Don was editing *STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES*, that rather unique pulp magazine which was really two magazines, split down the middle; for the second half was *STIRRING FANTASY FICTION*, with a separate contents page, editorial, departments, etc. Plans were afoot to make the magazine a large size, 64 page saddle-stitched publication, and he was getting to work on arranging for the contents of the second issue in the new format. The first was lined up, and, alas, would appear almost immediately after Pearl Harbor. That finished it.

At this time—earlier in 1941—a number of us had formed what we called The Cabal. The Cabal was designed as a working writers group, with a ruthless determination to avoid any aspect of the usual mutual admiration society. Meetings would be held once a week, at the apartment

of Cyril Kornbluth, and each member was expected to bring at least a completed outline of a story; although anyone who did not produce finished stories after a certain length of time would firmly be put out. Readings were followed by candid comments not on the like-dislike level but on what seemed like the satisfactory working out of the story and the probabilities of selling the manuscript. Politeness was observed mostly in the breach; and since I was agent for the several members, stories which the Cabal unanimously agreed were ready for submission were turned over to me. Considering all the circumstances (which included the fact that two members were also editors) Cabal stories did not do too badly.

So when *The Leapers* was finished, it went to The Cabal, rather than being turned directly over to Don, although, of course, he read it there, being a member. I remember this

meeting very well, because it was the first and only time that Cyril ever showed any signs of being impressed by anything I had written. When he finished it, he shook his head a little dazedly, muttered in a somewhat awed tone, "It's absorbing," and passed it along to the next reader, adding later that he wouldn't change a word of it.

Well, we were all very young . . . even the precocious Mr. K. But it's nonetheless heart-warming to be appreciated by someone whom you know to be a severe critic, with respectable standards, and particularly one who has heretofore roasted you thoroughly.

Had there been another issue of *STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES*, *The Leapers* would have appeared there in the fantasy section, and the novelet which John Michel and I wrote under the original title of *The Enemy* (Don had announced it in the previous issue) would have been in the science fiction section. As it

The Reckoning

A few readers (less than 10%) did not want to vote on part one of the Blackwood serial, but the vast majority played along in the grand manner of WEIRD TALES and ASTOUNDING/ANALOG readers; there's no reason at all why a particular installment of a serial should not be your choice of the best in that issue; and when each installment comes out tops—well, that's a rarity. Our winner this time was given competition by Mr. Blackwood, as well as G. G. Pendarves. Here is how you rated the May issue:

(1) *Kings of the Night*, Robert E. Howard; (2) *The Brain-Eaters*, Frank Belknap Long; (3) *A Psychical Invasion*, part one, Algernon Blackwood; (4) *The Dark Star*, G. G. Pendarves; (5) *Nasturtia*, Col. S. P. Meek; (6) *The Cunning of Private Rogoff*, David A. English. There was much praise for this last story, even while readers placed others higher.

FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION

presents

MEN OF THE DARK COMET

by
Festus Pragnell



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*the fifth and last of
the famous series —
complete in its picture
of a strange
civilization*

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THE FIRES DIE DOWN

A New Story

by
Robert Silverberg

*Insure your copy now—see
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was, both stories ran in my own magazine *FUTURE Fantasy and Science Fiction*.

Re-reading *The Leapers* after many years, since a number of you asked for it, it seemed to me that some matters had not been worked out as thoroughly as they should have been—the ending in particular was rushed—and that trying to write a "Lovecraft story" had resulted in my relying overmuch on conventional Lovecraft gestures, right for HPL, but not for another, as well as a misguided effort to string out poetry as prose in some spots. Revision and expansion has been along the lines of letting the material lead where it seemed to me it ought to lead, and to get more of the HPL feeling without more literal imitation, although there's enough of that so that it does seem to me that this can pass as a reasonable pastiche. But I won't expand any farther into your area, for it is for you, the readers, to decide whether the present version is good, and whether it is an improvement on the original—two different questions entirely.

L. Sprague de Camp writes: "Dear Bob: About Mr. Grose's comment on my comment on Robert E. Howard's suicide: My purpose was not to condemn Howard but to show my exasperation that a man with REH's writing potential should have cut short his career, robbing readers of who-knows-how-many gripping yarns. I agree that the phrase 'blowing his silly head off' was ill-chosen, and I'm sorry I used it. But then, I wrote that line nearly fifteen years ago, when I had but lately come to know Howard's writings, and hope

Coming Next Issue

It was a mad thing to do, of course. But the three of us were together for perhaps the last time. And we were all just out of school, and none of us was twenty-two, and each of us had one drink too many. Also, the night was one of those mad, intoxicating nights that rarely come more than once in any man's lifetime.

Glamour. The night was thick with it. A blue, blue star-shot sky. The Gulf spread out to meet it, white under the breath-taking beauty of the great moon. All the rippling, gurgling voices of a summer sea, all the Circe-scents of jasmine flowers, magnolias, and orange trees in bloom. We couldn't sleep. We couldn't stay inside.

I don't remember who suggested swimming out to the float. We were none of us accountable, exactly. But I remember we all agreed to it, though we all knew that the tide was out and running strong. Indeed, I never knew such another ebb as we felt that night. It swept us out with all the force of the current of a great river in flood-time. And it served to sober us. We were glad to reach the float and lie on it and rest. We knew we could never go back against a tide like that. We'd have to wait until morning.

So Nelson Todd and I made the best of it and slept. But when the hot sun waked us, Shane O'Farrell was gone.

It did not occur to us then to be uneasy. We swam in, dressed, and went down to breakfast. It was only then, when we couldn't find him, and when Todd's family and Todd's servants—it was Todd's father's house where we were staying—declared they hadn't seen or heard of him, that we began to be alarmed. And by that time it was too late to do any good. . . . We knew what that tremendous ebb was like. If it had got O'Farrell . . . but it was more than three years before we knew.

For Shane O'Farrell came back, as suddenly, as unexpectedly, as he had gone . . .

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ONCE IN A THOUSAND YEARS

by Frances Bragg Middleton

What Was The Secret Of The Silent Slayer?

"I know every animal up at Groote Schuur better than I know you, Doctor, and I was born in up-country Africa and have been tens of thousands of miles through it. There's no ape or other animal could make those fingerprints. . . "

There was an awed silence as one after another each man took careful stock of the dark purple marks on the dead woman's wrists. Undoubtedly they were bruises. Each finger, bone for bone, was distinctly traced, but the fingers were connected nearly to their tips with closely woven nets. The hands that had made these marks were webbed as the feet of a duck or, perhaps, as those of a frog.

"No," the doctor admitted presently, and there was a shudder in his voice. "Those hands certainly do not belong to any animal, and they most emphatically don't appear to belong to any human being. . . ."

You Won't Want To Miss

WEBBED HANDS

by Ferdinand Berthoud

Complete in the Summer Issue of

STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES

see page 127

I shan't be called to account for it forever.

"I began writing professionally in 1937, the year after Howard's death. During the next dozen years I heard vaguely of Howard but had never read any of his stories until *Conan The Conqueror* appeared as a book in 1950. I read it and was hooked. Since then, in the course of editing some of his unpublished stories and completing several unfinished ones, I have come to know a good deal about Howard—if not quite so much as Glenn Lord, the agent for his estate, who makes Howard and his writings his main avocation. Three years ago I spent several days driving about Texas and interviewing Howard's boyhood friends. (See 'Memories of R. E. H.,' in *AMRA*, v. II, no. 38, to be reprinted in the forthcoming *Conan Reader*, Baltimore: Mirage Press.) I have also had something to do with the current Howard revival, as a result of which there are now eight paperbacked and four cloth-bound Howard books in print, with several more to come.

"In the course of these doings, I have found that Howard and I had an extraordinary lot of interests in common, and I still envy his talent as a natural storyteller. I do think I know something of the emotions and neuroses that led to his end. If I in my own life have avoided his more egregious vagaries and follies, that has been the result more of good luck than of good management."

Charles Hidley raises a very valid point, in relation to what I said about the way in which votes on the

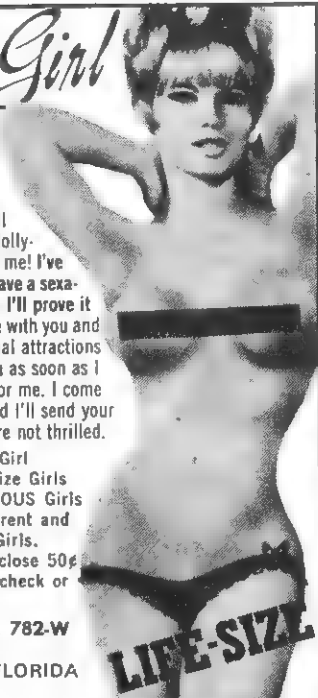
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Why Was The Dog Shot In The Night?

Farnsworth swept the searchlight around the mongrel's lifeless body. Then he banged the window shut and sat down again, shaking his head as if amazed that we didn't understand.

"I shot it because it reminded me of something not very pleasant, and to get it out of its misery, for it was slowly starving to death. . . . Did any of you ever have the pleasant experience of building a little fortress out of the bones of your friends?"

He didn't wait for an answer. "I saw a man who had that delightful experience," he went on. "The shock was too much for him. It nearly did me in, too. . . ." His voice grew tragic. "All this happened out in the Mongolian plains. And it wouldn't have happened if the human lust for money didn't exist."

Don't Miss This Strange Novelet

TIBETAN IMAGE

by Herb Lewis

Complete in Issue #3 of

WORLD-WIDE ADVENTURE

see page 127

question of our reprinting *The Devil's Bride* was put in our last issue: ". . . your method is so unfair! How can you call 'abstention' the failure to vote on the part of someone who hasn't read *The Editor's Page*? Surely there are many readers who send in the Preference Page, but who may not be concerned with the departments and to give their non-vote a weight is most unequal."

I meant what I said, but this suggests that I did not say what I meant quite clearly. I shall put the question on the Preference Page this time, and urge readers to read this section of *It Is Written* before sending their pages in.

In 1932, *WEIRD TALES* published a book-length novel by Seabury Quinn, *The Devil's Bride*, which is the longest of the De Grandin-Dr. Trowbridge series, in six parts. I have always considered this among the very best of the series, and many readers have urged its reprint. We have run a number of the shorter de Grandin stories, complete, in *STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES*; but *The Devil's Bride* would have to run as a serial. Moreover, it would have to be run in three, not two, parts—combining two installments of the original version each time. For a quarterly magazine, I feel that even a two-part story is too much; however, once *MAGAZINE OF HORROR* went bimonthly, the pleas to serialize *The Devil's Bride* began.

I should like to do so, but I want to be certain that a clear majority of you, the active readers, really want it; and the only way I can be sure a reader wants it is to see the

"yes" space checked on a Preference Page or facsimile of same.

So if I receive a Preference Page, or facsimile, *bearing the question but not checked either "yes" or "no"*, I shall count *this* type of abstention as a "no" vote. But this will not apply to letters, postcards, etc., wherein the question is not mentioned at all—for some of these may well be instances of readers who have not read the question, or looked at this department. Not being that telepathic, I cannot separate these from genuine abstentions, so I shall not consider either an abstention.

To repeat: if the "yes" votes exceed the "no" vote plus abstentions on a Preference Page or a facsimile of it (meaning that the question is copied out), then we shall bring you *The Devil's Bride* as early as possible thereafter. Every vote in favor will be counted, no matter how received. (The exceptions, of course, will be those who have already voted. I'm keeping a careful record, so abstention out of honesty won't be misinterpreted.)

Steffan B. Aletti (author of *The Castle in the Window*), writes: "I've thought a great deal about horror; I've come to the conclusion that it's very often an inborn interest. For no apparent reason (to me anyway), when I came of reading age, I bought the Modern Library editions of *Famous Ghost Stories* and *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural*; about that time, Nelson Olmstead was on the radio at night reading horror stories on his program, 'Sleep No More'. Several years after this, the horror movies arrived on television, and every Friday night I

Did You Miss Our Very First Issue?

#1, August 1963: The Man With a Thousand Legs, Frank Belknap Long; A Thing of Beauty, Wallace West; The Yellow Sign, Robert W. Chambers; The Maze and the Monster, Edward D. Hoch; The Death of Halpin Frayser, Ambrose Bierce; Babylon: 70 M., Donald A. Wollheim; The Inexperienced Ghost, H. G. Wells; The Unbeliever, Robert Silverberg; Fidel Bassin, W. J. Stamper; The Last Dawn, Frank Lillie Pollock, The Undying Head, Mark Twain.

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we can't say how long
this will be true!

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*Ascot Keane comes
to grips with Doc-
tor Satan, in the
case of the*

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by
Paul Ernst

in the Summer issue of

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Have You Missed These Issues?

#2, November 1963: *The Space Eaters*, Frank Belknap Long; *The Faceless Thing*, Edward D. Hoch; *The Red Room*, H.G. Wells; *Hungary's Female Vampire*, Dean Lip-top; *A Tough Tussle*, Ambrose Bierce; *Doorslammer*, Donald A. Wollheim; *The Electric Chair*, George Waight; *The Other One*, Jerry L. Keane; *The Charmer*, Archie Bians; *Clarissa*, Robert A. W. Lowndes; *The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes*, Rudyard Kipling.

#3, Feb. 1964: *Out of print.*

#4, Sept. 1964: *Out of print.*

#5, September 1964: *Cassius*, Henry S. Whitehead; *Love at First Sight*, J. L. Miller; *Five-Year Contract*, J. Vernon Shea; *The House of the Worm*, Merle Froust; *The Beautiful Suit*, H. G. Wells; *A Stranger Came to Reap*, Stephen Dentinger; *The Morning the Birds Forgot to Sing*, Walt Liebscher; *Bones*, Donald A. Wollheim; *The Ghostly Rental*, Henry James.

#6, November 1964: *Caverns of Horror*, Laurence Manning; *Prodigy*, Walt Liebscher; *The Mask*, Robert W. Chambers; *The Life-After-Death of Mr. Thaddeus Warde*, Robert Barbour Johnson; *The Feminine Fraction*, David Grinnell; *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment*, Nathaniel Hawthorne; *The Pacer*, August Derleth; *The Moth*, H. G. Wells; *The Door to Saturn*, Clark Ashton Smith.

would watch them; I thus got to see all the classics as well as some really terrible old movies that were more horrible in quality than content.

"Incidentally, I've mourned greatly the demise of radio as a dramatic vehicle. As I had no television until I was already in high school, radio was the wonderland of my youth. And how much more powerful it was than TV; it was through radio that I learned to value the imagination of the individual reader or listener. He can always think up something more horrible than you can show him; by being too graphic, one always runs the risk of becoming silly. Hence a lot of horror movies give us monsters that are laughable, when, by being a bit more circumspect about letting us see the monster, they could have let us imagine for ourselves what it was like, and we could have done a better job of frightening ourselves. Radio programs like 'Minus One' and 'Through the Halls of Fantasy' were infinitely more frightening than television programs like 'Thriller', though they were well done. When I heard a dramatization of *The Monkey's Paw* on the radio I was terrified for a full week! They presented me with the sounds of the howling wind, the dead man's moaning, and the rattling of the door chain as the man and wife scrambled about in the darkness, desperately working against each other; I presented myself with the monster, and I nearly scared myself to death.

"My point is that it is the darkness within our own minds that frightens us, and a writer does well to take advantage of this. That is why when Lovecraft refers to some as 'unname-

able' and declines a description, I am not furious at being cheated; he has simply given me the gift of allowing me to torture myself."

I entirely concur about the general superiority of radio presentations of horror over films; I thrilled week after week to "The Witch's Tale" on the radio, and while a few movies (or parts of movies) have chilled me then and now, most have been inferior to radio even when there was an honest attempt at artistic and effective presentation. (Most horror films are rooted in the producers' contempt for the audience.) Although I cannot see the Bela Lugosi *Dracula* without regretting that the book was not followed more closely, it remained effective the last time I saw it. *White Zombie* (also Lugosi), while no great shakes as a plot was effectively done. And the "supernatural" elements in *The Scoundrel* were splendidly done, even if the "corpse" of Tony Mallare floating in the sea is obviously a dummy—obvious the very first time I saw it.

Films dealing with mundane horror and terror (man's inhumanity to man, without supernatural effects) have been very effective; but where the imaginary horrors have posed for photos, somehow they haven't come out well, on the whole. Yet, oddly enough—or perhaps it isn't odd at all—the "supernatural" comedies have come off delightfully more often than not. The apparitions in the "Topper" series and *Blythe Spirit*, as well as in the Alastair Sim version of *A Christmas Carol* are wonderfully satisfactory.

John Linehan asks if anyone owns

Coming Soon
THE WHITE DOG
by Feodor Sologub

Have You Missed These Issues?

#7, January 1965: *The Thing From—Outside*, George Allan England; *Black Thing at Midnight*, Joseph Payne Brennan; *The Shadows on the Wall*, Mary Wilkins-Freeman; *The Phantom Farmhouse*, Seabury Quinn; *The Oblong Box*, Edgar Allan Poe; *A Way With Kids*, Ed M. Clinton; *The Devil of the Marsh*, E. B. Marriott-Watson; *The Shuttered Room*, H. P. Lovecraft & August Derleth.

#8, April 1965: *The Black Lough*, William J. Makin; *The Hand of Glory*, R. H. D. Barham; *The Garrison*, David Grinnell; *Passeur*, Robert W. Chambers; *The Lady of the Velvet Collar*, Washington Irving; *Jack*, Reynold Junker; *The Burglar-Proof Vault*, Oliver Taylor; *The Dead Who Walk*, Ray Cummings.

#9, June 1965: *The Night Wire*, H. F. Arnold; *Sacrilege*, Wallace West; *All the Stain of Long Delight*, Jerome Clark; *Skulls in the Stars*, Robert E. Howard; *The Photographs*, Richard Marsh; *The Distortion out of Space*, Francis Flagg; *Guarantee Period*, William M. Danner; *The Door in the Wall*, H. G. Wells; *The Three Low Masses*, Alphonse Daudet; *The Whistling Room*, William Hope Hodgson.

Order From Page 128

Coming Soon
**THE CASE OF THE
 SINISTER SHAPE**
 by Gordon MacCreagh

Have You Missed These Issues?

#10, August 1965: *The Girl at Heddon's*, Pauline Kappel Priluck; *The Torture of Hope*, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam; *The Cloth of Madness*, Seabury Quinn; *The Tree*, Gerald W. Page; *In the Court of the Dragon*, Robert W. Chambers; *Placide's Wife*, Kirk Mashburn; *Come Closer*, Joanna Russ; *The Plague of the Living Dead*, A. Hyatt Verrill.

#11, November 1965: *The Empty Zoo*, Edward D. Hoch; *A Psychological Shipwreck*, Ambrose Bierce; *The Call of the Mech-Men*, Laurence Manning; *Was It a Dream?*, Guy de Maupassant; *Under the Hau Tree*, Katherine Yates; *The Head of Du Bois*, Dorothy Norman Cooke; *The Dweller in Dark Valley*, (verse) Robert E. Howard; *The Devil's Pool*, Grege la Spina.

#12, Winter 1965/66: *The Faceless God*, Robert Bloch; *Master Nicholas*, Seabury Quinn; *But Not the Herald*, Roger Zelazny; *Dr. Munding, Exorcist*, Gordon MacCreagh; *The Affair at 7 Rue de M.*, John Steinbeck; *The Man in the Dark*, Irwin Ross; *The Abyss*, Robert A. W. Lowndes; *Denatation* (verse), Robert E. Howard; *Memories of HPL*, Muriel E. Eddy; *The Black Beast*, Henry S. Whitehead.

Order From Page 128

the actual title, *WEIRD TALES*, and if I am in any way related to Marie Belloc Lowndes, author of *The Lodger*. To the first question: to the best of my present knowledge and belief, the title to *WEIRD TALES* is owned by Mr. Leo Margolies, who purchased the titles both to WT and *SHORT STORIES* magazine; an attempt to revive *SHORT STORIES* some years back did not have encouraging results. To the second question: No, I am in no way related to the author of *The Lodger*, nor do I own any property on Lowndes Square in London. Mr. Linehan goes on to say: "You seem to indicate as though you would enjoy personal correspondence and not consider it a chore as some would."

No, I don't consider personal correspondence a chore—only, for the most part an impossibility.

Richard Grose who liked *Private Rogoff* and *The Brain-Eaters* best, followed by *Nasturtia*, writes: "With trembling pen in hand, I must begin by saying that I found *A Psychical Invasion* last in my order of preference of the stories in the May MOH. I know full well that such a declaration will incur the wrath of the majority of my fellow readers and the editor's as well. I sadly rate it a '4' partly because I'm biased against any kind of psychic science type of tale. No doubt this is due to a lack in me.

"It is certainly not because I don't like Blackwood. Being a Lovecraftian I was drawn to Blackwood's works after reading HPL's statement concerning *The Willows*. In *Some Notes on a Nonentity*, HPL said:

'The greatest weird tale ever written is probably Algernin Blackwood's *The Willows*'. I don't fully agree but that tale is one of my favorites.

"As to the specifics of why *A Psychical Invasion* misfired for me, I can only say that although in some ways the story is very interesting and well written, I'm really not very interested in knowing more about 'the malignant entity' that haunts Mr. Pender. One positive force in this story is that it in no way seems dated."

My wrath is not aroused; rather my appreciation. It is not often that one can keep a strong bias from becoming a prejudice. But a prejudiced person would not have noted the positive qualities in the Blackwood story, while honest bias can say, "Good, but I don't like it."

Herbert E. Beach writes: "I've shown my preference for longer stories before, so no need to dwell on that. Serials are quite acceptable by me, even in *STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES* on a quarterly basis. I am definitely in favor of Quinn's *The Devil's Bride* in either magazine, although you mention it this time in MOH, while the series appears in SMS. How about this for a wild suggestion: As MOH is appearing more frequently, run the yarn in three installments as you mentioned, but with parts one and three in MOH. The middle part could then appear in SMS between the two issues of MOH, and everybody would be happy. The story could be read in a shorter period of time waiting for installments, and at least a portion of it would have appeared

Have You Missed These Issues?

#13, Summer 1966: *The Thing in the House*, H. F. Scotten; *Divine Madness*, Roger Zelazny; *Valley of the Lost*, Robert E. Howard; *Heredity*, David H. Keller; *Dwelling of the Righteous*, Anna Hunger; *Almost Immortal*, Austin Hall.

#14, Winter 1966/67: *The Lath of the Star-Spawn*, Derleth & Schorer; *The Vacant Lot*, Mary Wilkins-Freeman; *Proof*, S. Fowler Wright; *Comes Now the Power*, Roger Zelazny; *The Moth Message*, Laurence Manning; *The Friendly Demon*, Daniel DeFoe; *Dark Hollow*, Emil Petaja; *An Inhabitant of Carcosa*, Ambrose Bierce; *The Monster-God of Mamurth*, Edmond Hamilton.

#15, Spring 1967: *The Room of Shadows*, Arthur J. Burks; *Lilies*, Robert A. W. Lowndes; *The Flaw*, J. Vernon Shea; *The Doom of London*, Robert Barr; *The Vale of Lost Women*, Robert E. Howard; *The Ghoul Gallery*, Hugh B. Cave.

#16, Summer 1967: *Night and Silence*, Maurice Level; *Lazarus*, Leonid Andreyev; *Mr. Octubr*, Joseph Payne Brennan; *The Dog That Laughed*, Charles Willard Difrini; *Ah, Sweet Youth*, Pauline Kappel Prilucik; *The Man Who Never Was*, R. A. Lafferty; *The Leaden Ring*, S. Baring-Gould; *The Monster of the Prophecy*, Clark Ashton Smith.

#17, Fall 1967: *A Sense of Crawling*, Robert Edmond Alter; *The Laughing Duke*, Wallace West; *Dernod's Bane*, Robert E. Howard; *The Spell of the Sword*, Frank Aubrey; "Williamson", Henry S. Whitehead; *The Curse Of Amen-Ra*, Victor Rousseau.

Order From Page 128

Have You Missed These Issues?

#18, November 1967: *In Amundsen's Tent*, John Martin Leahy; *Transient and Immortal*, Jim Haught; *Out of the Deep*, Robert E. Howard; *The Bibliophile*; Thomas Boyd; *The Ultimate Creature*, R. A. Lafferty; *Wolves of Darkness*, Jack Williamson.

#19, January 1968: *The Red Witch*, Nictria Dyalhis; *The Last Letter From Norman Underwood*, Larry Eugene Meredith; *The Jewels of Vishnu*, Harriet Bennett; *The Man From Cincinnati*, Holloway Horn; *Ground Fire*, Anna Hunger; *The Wind In The Rose-Bush*, Mary Wilkins-Freeman; *The Last of Placide's Wife*, Kirk Mashburn; *The Years are as a Knife*, (verse) Robert E. Howard.

#20, March 1968: *The Siren of the Snakes*, Arlton Eadie; *The Rack*, G. G. Ketcham; *A Cry From Beyond*, Victor Rousseau; *Only Gone Before*, Emil Petajä; *The Voice*, Nell Kay; *The Monsters*, Murray Leinster.

#21, May 1968: *Kings of the Night*, Robert E. Howard; *The Cunning of Private Rogoff*, David A. English; *The Brain-Eaters*, Frank Belknap Long; *A Psychical Invasion* (part one), Algernon Blackwood; *Nasturtia*, Col. S. P. Meek; *The Dark Star*, G. G. Pendarves.

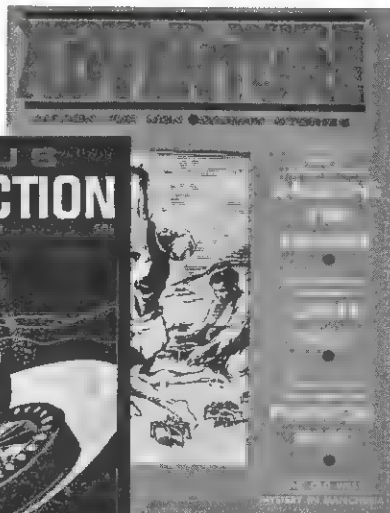
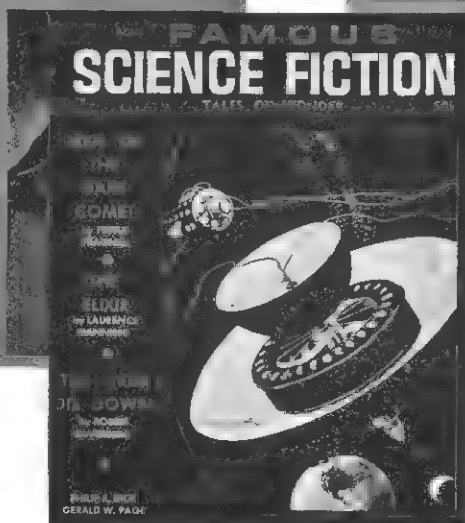
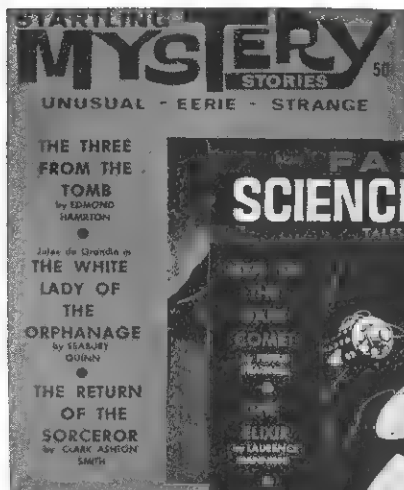
#22, July 1968: *Worms of the Earth*, Robert E. Howard; *Come*, Anna Hunger; *They Called Him Ghost*, Laurence J. Cahill; *The Phantom 'Rickshaw*, Rudyard Kipling; *The Castle in the Window*, Stefan B. Aletti; *A Psychical Invasion*, (part two), Algernon Blackwood.

in SMS to appease the fanatics. Think of the possibilities . . . if some of your readers have been reading either one or the other of the magazines, you would get them to try the other in order to complete the story. And, by doing this, you would have come up with a magazine first: a serial running concurrently in two separate magazines. Yes, I remember when *FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES* introduced *FANTASTIC NOVELS*, back in 1940, and they completed *The Blind Spot*, which had started in FFM, in FN, in order to get you to buy the new magazine; but they reprinted all of the earlier episodes from FFM in the FN issue, so it isn't the same thing. And, yes, we've had a situation in which one magazine folds and another picks up a serial in it and prints it under another title. (*STARTLING STORIES* did this with a Leinster novel, I believe.) But these were different companies, and it's not the same thing, so think of the possibilities! That's enough thought; now do it. Unless . . . unless you'd want to print the yarn complete in one issue of SMS. I can remember when a certain editor did this—devoted the entire magazine to one story. *DYNAMIC SCIENCE FICTION* was the magazine, and it might have been the fifth issue, and it was published by Columbia Publications—oh well, it'll come to me sooner or later."

I have thought of the possibilities.
My answer is No.

And when it comes to you, perhaps you'll remember that there were three other stories in that issue of *DYNAMIC SCIENCE FICTION*.

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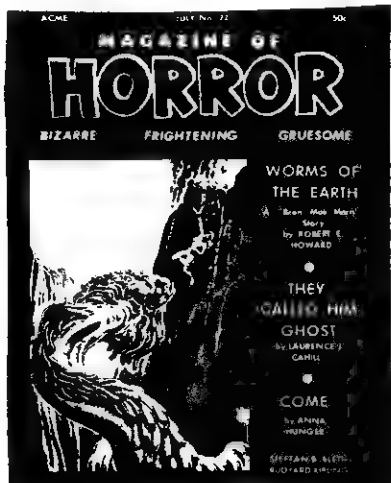
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Comment — Suggested stories, authors, etc.

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Please rate the stories in the order of your preference, as many as possible. Ties are always acceptable. If you thought a story was bad (rather than just last place), put an "X" beside it. If you thought a story was truly outstanding, above just first place mark an "O" beside it. (Then the next-best would be "1")

THE ABYSS

THE DEATH MASK

ONE BY ONE

THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR

LEAPERS

Did you like the cover? Yes _____ No _____

Would you like to see *The Devil's Bride* reprinted in this magazine?

(Please read Mr. Hidley's letter, which starts at the bottom of page 118, and our comment, before voting.) Yes _____ No _____

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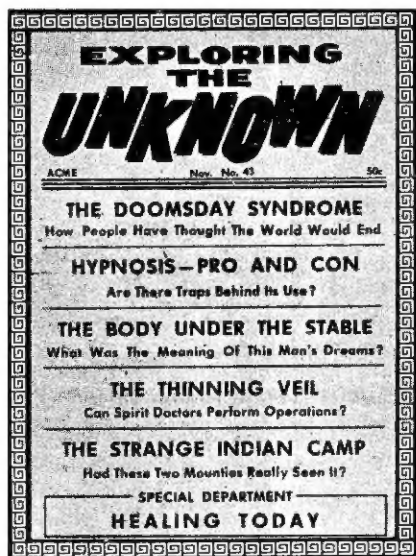
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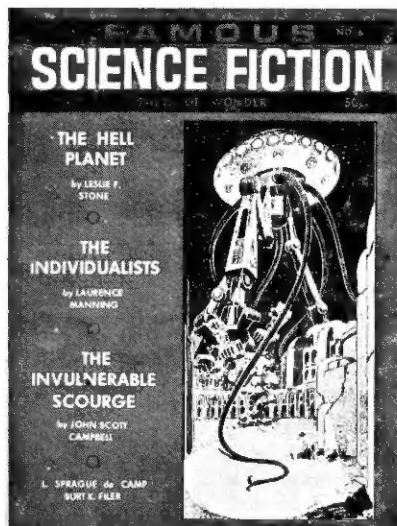
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